Independent PlayStation Magazine

PS3

INDEPENDENT PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

HOLIDAY 2006

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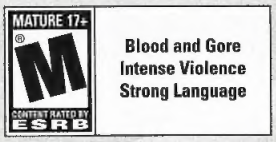

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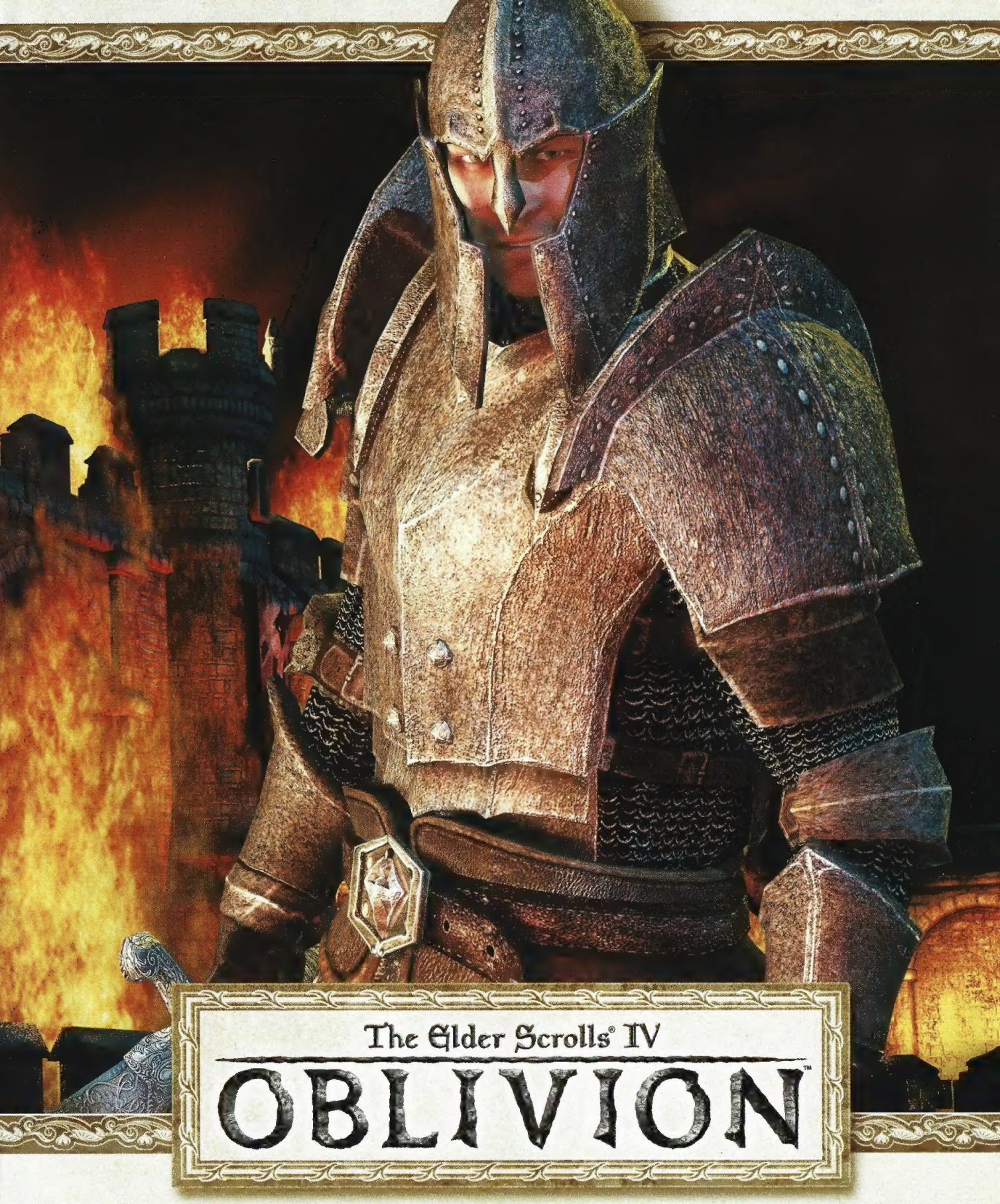

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Why We Make PSM

1 We love games
We know how exciting it is to find that rare game that will keep you playing for days without sleep. We also know how tough it is to pick that game out of the hundreds on sale. Buyers need expert guidance, but most game magazines read like an overstuffed catalog, only adding to the confusion.

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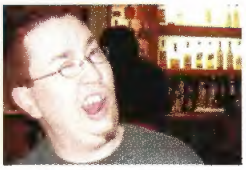
Chris Slate

Which games will define the PS3 experience?

PlayStation 3 is finally here, and as launches go, its first games look pretty good. What I find most exciting, though, is that new systems tend to see the start of big new game franchises – PS one introduced us to *Tomb Raider*, *Resident Evil*, and the 3D reinvention of *Metal Gear*; PS2 hosted *Devil May Cry* and the first modern *Grand Theft Auto*. What games will shape the way that we view the PS3 era for years to come? A good early bet is *John Woo's Stranglehold*. With true next-gen action and immersion, this game could be the start of something special (just turn the page to see for yourself!).

Chris

DEPUTY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Kaiser Hwang
Never forget: the man who doesn't play has lost forever the child who lived in him and who he will miss terribly.



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Here's me and PK, a PSM reader I met while waiting in line, with our PS3 pre-orders. PS3, we're ready for you!

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I want to wish each and every one of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Now listen to the damn podcast!

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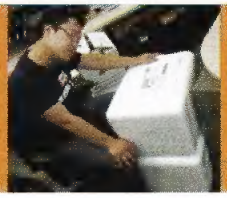
Watch an old movie called "The Thin Man" this holiday. Because I said to, that's why!

ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR
Gary Liew
I am telling you, this box is too small! I can't find my left ear lately and my chin is numb!

The PSM Office



Deputy EIC Orders $600 Worth of Meat, Then Boycotts Meat

Deputy Editor-In-Chief Kaiser Hwang received two large chests of valuable meat products, which he took home, put into cold storage, and has left there indefinitely.

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PREVIEWS

Superman or God... >>

PS3: John Woo Presents: Stranglehold

JOHN WOO AND MIDWAY REDEFINE DESTRUCTION

Take one part John Woo, one part Chow Yun-Fat, and two parts dual-wielded pistols, cram them all into the Unreal Engine running on PlayStation 3 and what do you get? Lots of bullets, to start.

At its core, *Stranglehold* is a game about shooting stuff. Shooting bad guys. Shooting elevated objects so that they crush bad guys. Shooting in slow motion. Shooting the wall. Running and shooting. Diving and shooting. Running, diving, grabbing hold of a lantern hanging from the ceiling, and shooting some more. It's a "ballet of death and destruction," as producer Jack Van Leer calls it; enemies will be minced, words will not.

After playing and watching the game over the course of an afternoon at Midway HQ in Chicago, one thing becomes abundantly clear: the goal here is to create an interactive John Woo film – a game that allows the player to become director, protagonist, and stunt coordinator all in one. Not with words, necessarily, but with the brand of frenetic, balls-to-the-wall (and to-the-floorboards, and to-the-ceiling) action that has become his trademark. "Woo's characters do much of their speaking with their guns," says director Brian Eddy, as we watch a digitized Yun-Fat kick over a table to use as cover, quickly swap his dual nines for an over-powered shotgun, and unload into a trio of Chinese Mafioso. The blast sends their bodies flying backward and into a wall, the impact of which causes said wall to violently shed several layers of wood and stucco. Suffice it to say, you'll be doing quite a bit of speaking in *Stranglehold*, if you catch our meaning.

The game's developers spend a great deal of time talking about the way things move.

EXTINCT As in the guy will be.

ONE GUN Now he's Superman.

GIVE A MAN TWO GUNS And he'll be able to take out two goons. And maybe a dinosaur.

JUMP AND SHOOT That's what we call multitasking.

way they flow, the way they tie together. If you're playing the game the way it's meant to be played, you're rarely standing still: there's always a railing to scamper up, a dining table to slide across, or a wall to be run up and ensuingly backflipped from. Many have remarked that the game feels like a cross between *Tony Hawk* and a straight-ahead shooter; we agree. There's a certain satisfaction that comes from taking out enemies in style, with the ability to string together combos as you jump, dive, and roll from surface to surface. As a simple fly-through reveals, many of the game's levels are huge, but are effectively broken up into smaller, more self-contained rooms that allow for the sort of sandbox-style experimentation that the developers are aiming for.

"The idea is that you can approach any given situation from a number of different angles," says out Eddy as we slide gently through some decidedly seedy back alleys. He's being fairly literal: while there won't be any options for peace summits or arm-wrestling contests in *Stranglehold*, you'll be able to kill those in your way from above, below, or

"WOO'S CHARACTERS DO MUCH OF THEIR SPEAKING WITH THEIR GUNS"
Director Brian Eddy

info

AVAILABLE	Spring 2007
TYPE	Action Adventure
MULTIPLAYER	1-8 Players
ONLINE	Yes
ESRB rating	Pending
PUBLISHER	Midway
MADE BY	Midway Chicago

HONG KONG ONLINE

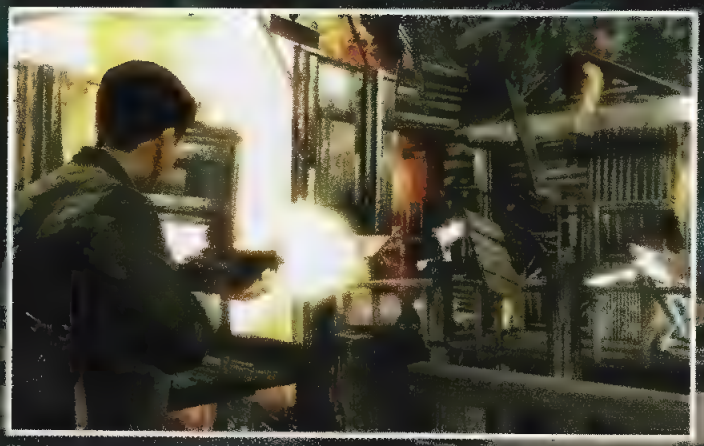
While details are being held close to the chest, *Stranglehold* will indeed include some sort of online multiplayer mode, with some "special appearances" by some well-known characters. While the team had hoped to include a co-op mode, it has been scrapped in order to focus more closely on a tight single-player experience.

ORANGE YOU GLAD You can shoot anything and everything.

straight-ahead. When you're in the process of a slide or a dive, the action automatically bumps itself into "Tequila Time" (read: slow motion), giving you ample time to choose your targets. If you're approaching three enemies underneath a large streetlight, you'll be able to accurately place your bullets above and make these objects fall upon the ne'er-do-wells below. If you're extra slick, you'll be able to figure out how to actually climb up onto those streetlights and attack your enemies from above. While it remains to be seen just how much of the game will allow for this kind of experimentation, every area we were shown was built with this sort of multiplicity in mind. This is clearly one of the team's highest priorities...

...as is being true to Woo's legacy. Invoking classics like *A Better Tomorrow* and *Hard Boiled*, *Stranglehold* takes place in gritty locales across both Hong Kong and Chicago. The former's environments range from the ramshackle housing structures along the coastline, to

RAIL SLIDE Just like Tony Hawk.



WOOD RAIN The physics help make the explosions so impressive.

THE MATRIX It's not, but there are some similarities.

DRIVE SIDEWAYS

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the bustling streets of an urban marketplace, to a battle inside Jumbo, a well-known restaurant built in the middle of the ocean (renamed Mega for the game due to licensing issues). Those familiar with the Windy City will recognize that the game's opulent penthouse sits right in the heart of downtown Chicago, while the Museum of Natural History should provide plenty of opportunities for gunplay (think running up the spine of a T-Rex skeleton). There will be eight levels in all, and fans of "having a life" will be happy to hear that the team is aiming for a densely packed eight-hour experience rather than a meandering 15-hour adventure. In fact, the game was originally conceived as an open-world, free-roaming game, before the team realized that this simply didn't allow for the sort of gameplay density they were aiming for.

It's nothing if not chaotic. Make no mistake: we're plenty familiar running around in games and, you know.

MEXICAN STANDOFF

As fans of John Woo's back catalog will be pleased to hear, the team has been trying to figure out a way to turn the director's trademark "Mexican standoff" scenes into gameplay. At the moment, the result is a mini-game, in which the player dodges and fires at his various surrounding attackers in slow motion from an over-the-shoulder perspective, carefully placing each bullet and dodging others, à la Neo (complete with circular motion trails). Think *Tetris*, but with bullets... in slow motion... actually, just forget we ever mentioned *Tetris*.

THE FACE The artists actually had to make Yun-Fat look younger.

TWO GUNS Will travel.

STAR VEHICLE

While the majority of *Stranglehold* will be played on foot (or off it, depending on how much your left index finger likes the "dive" trigger button), the team is also implementing some vehicle sequences, shown to us for the first time. "If you look at any John Woo film, you'll notice that he loves the big car chase, the big boat chase," says Eddy. The team is recreating both of these in their game; we're shown an SUV chase and a boat-on-boat gunfight. While the vehicle segments are still early, the team promises consistency with the standard on-foot gameplay.

SHIRTS VS. SHIRTS Usually the bad guys wear black and the good guys wear white...

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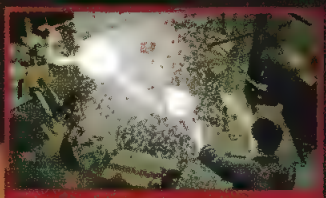
SHENMUE Tequila's looking for some sailors... to shoot.

shooting stuff, but *Stranglehold* looks to up the bar on this mechanic in unforeseen ways. You don't run into a table and get stuck; instead, you run up to a table and slide across it, knock it over and duck behind it, or shoot it into a million splinters. "We want the player to flow through the levels, like water over rocks," says Lead Designer Neil Glancy. "We don't want the player getting stuck." Assuming that the team can apply this free-flowing philosophy to the game as a whole – and imbue the entire experience with the sort of variety and style our demo showed flashes of – this could very well keep our guns blazing in 2007. EVAN SHAMOON

WOO SCHOOL FLAVOR

As those keeping score at home have already figured out, *Stranglehold* is the first collaboration between John Woo and Chow-Yun-Fat since 1995's *The Killer*. Yun-Fat will reprise his role as Inspector Tequila; the team traveled to China to gather motion-capture and voice-over work from the megastar. Woo's involvement is similar to that of an executive producer: he plays various revisions of the game, gives feedback, and provides source material for many aspects of the game. "One thing he's suggested is adding humor," says Eddy, citing the example of a seagull dropping a deposit on a gangster at a particularly tense moment. "You'll never see heads exploding in our game – it's not John's style, and it's not the style of *Stranglehold*."



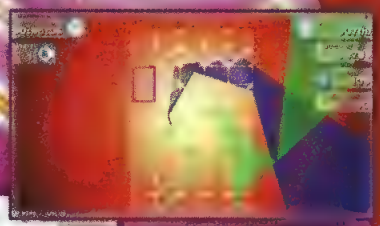
BREAKING THE MOLD(ING)

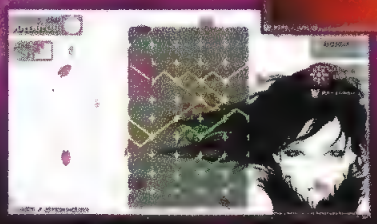
The intense destruction – or "Massive D," as the folks at Midway have not only coined but actually trademarked – is at the heart of *Stranglehold*'s furious action. These are perhaps the most destructible environments we've ever seen in a videogame: seemingly everything you fire at – the tiles in a wall, the wooden planks in the floor, the windows, and fruit stands – can all be blown to bits, chunks, or splinters at the pull of a trigger... and not in the "canned" manner we're used to. Rather, an elegant use of the Havok physics engine means that the way this stuff breaks depends on variables like the weapon in your hand, as well as the proximity and angle from which you approach it. It makes *Black*'s environmental damage look like child's play. Some highlights: shooting watermelons (and diving through the resulting chunks), carving our name in the wall – IN BULLETS – and the flyby at the end of a level showing the extent of your destruction. The team may even throw in a destroy-as-much-as-you-can-in-a-time-limit mini-game.

RAPID FIRE Who'd have thought that you could do so much damage with only two handguns?

GENIUS LOVES COMPANY!

"...both games are unique in style and play, you might even want to pick both up."
- IGN





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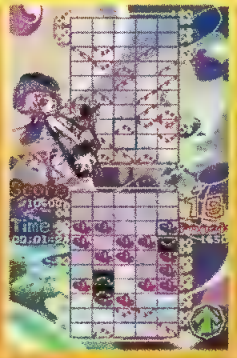

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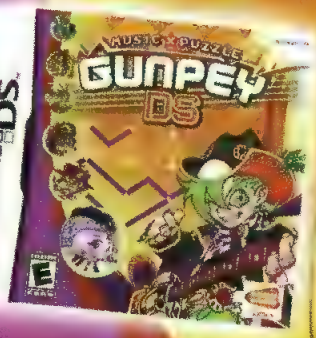
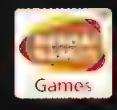


Crude Humor



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Dirt God Commandments

Thou shall race all offroading vehicles:
ATVs, bikes, buggies and trophy trucks.

Thou shall do sick freestyle tricks off jumps.

Thou shall not mud pants while getting big air.

Thou shall customize vehicle to make faster.

Thou shall race in all terrain: snow, dirt, sand,
forest and especially mud.

Thou shall not wash ATV unless thou washes it with mud.

Thou shall strive to become a pro racer.

Thou shall feed on adrenaline for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Thou shall honor all commandments of the Dirt Gods or feel their wrath.

ATV Offroad Fury™ 4. Now race with MX bikes, buggies and trophy trucks on over 70 new tracks. Live the life of a rookie rider in Story Mode, and customize your own tracks with Track Editor. The Dirt Gods are pleased.

Mild Lyrics
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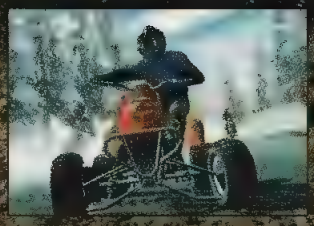
ATV Offroad Fury 4

BLAZE YOUR OWN TRAIL



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PlayStation 2

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PS3: Ninja Gaiden Sigma

XBOX'S PREMIER ACTION GAME GETS THE PS3 TREATMENT

If you think about it, having a *Ninja Gaiden* game on a PlayStation console is akin to the first time you saw *Sonic* on a Nintendo console; it's initially jarring because of the traditional exclusivity of the franchise, but ultimately exposes it to a wider audience. With developer Team Ninja's well known affinity for all things Xbox, having its premier series appear on the PS3 in a mostly-exclusive title can be seen as nothing but further proof that yes, the PS3 does matter, and that yes, it's capable enough to satisfy even the power-hungry team at Team Ninja.

As for this "mostly-exclusive" labeling, *Ninja Gaiden Sigma* is not an entirely new game. Rather, it's an upgraded version of *Ninja Gaiden Black*, itself a substantial upgrade from the original game. We're not talking a simple aesthetic upgrade here. We're talking a more complete experience – something like the final, definitive version of a game that simply couldn't have been made at an earlier time on previous hardware.

The game's director, Yohsuke Hayashi, breaks down the game's new features in relatively simple terms: "As a new element [in the game], the heroine character, Rachel, will become playable. The main character, Ryu Hayabusa, will also receive new actions, new combos and new weapons. Battles will also include many new enemies with more advanced AI." He continued by saying, "With all the new elements in the game from the very first moment you hold the controller, you'll know the differences," implying that beyond the new enemies and moves, there lies a more subtle refinement to the game's underlying combat system. He also said that he "especially want[s] the Master *Ninja Gaiden* players to experience those advancements," further emphasizing that the more familiar you are with the series, the more you will be able to appreciate its advancements in gameplay.

Of course, the most apparent change to the game is the increase in visual detail as it moves from the original Xbox to the PS3. "To describe the dramatic evolution of this game, I would say that it's like creating fresh air in a vacuum world where there was no trace of air before," says Hayashi. While a little cryptic given as is, his statement seems to suggest that the PS3 hardware allows

THE TALKO FACTOR

[illegible]

RACHEL
Always hot, and now playable!

the team to push the graphics to a level that simply wasn't technologically possible before, even on the Xbox. "Take a close look at Ryu Hayabusa's costume," continues Hayashi. "A small detail like his belt buckle will allow you to feel the material and its texture. This is just one example of increased quality throughout this game and that's what I mean by creating air."

Now, it's safe to assume that the increase in graphical detail, as well as the expanded storyline, will require more space on disc than the original Xbox game. This brings up an interesting point as Hayashi noted that "with the *Ninja Gaiden Black* on Xbox, we've already maximized the DVD capacity, therefore I'm certain that we'll need more than the [standard] DVD capacity." With all the controversy surrounding the true benefits of

IT'S TRUE The game looks this good while you're playing it.

info

AVAILABLE	Q2 2007
TYPE	Action-Adventure
MULTIPLAYER	To be Announced
ONLINE	To Be Announced
ESRB rating	Pending
PUBLISHER	Tecmo
MADE BY	Team Ninja

Sony's proprietary Blu-ray Disc format, here's proof that games can and will make use of the increased storage available. Interestingly, though, Hayashi was somewhat vague as to whether the game would support the much-touted 1080p resolution. "Those numbers aren't so important to us," he explained. "We're finding ways to make the game look its best from the total balance standpoint."

One area where the game won't be changing is in its difficulty. The *Ninja Gaiden* games are almost universally known to be some of the most challenging games out there – even since the very first NES games – and Team Ninja has no plans on turning it down, even for a more mainstream PlayStation audience. "I don't plan to simply make the game easier," says Hayashi. "Living on the edge is what this game is about. I also think that making the game easier for the PlayStation players would be disrespectful to them. Please be assured that *Sigma* will be designed to allow every skill level of action game fans to be able to enjoy this game without having to give up playing." It's comforting to know that they are taking to heart the interests of gamers and creating a game that is at once challenging, but not frustratingly so. KAISER HWANG

CONTROL-LING NINJAS

[illegible]

NEW MOVES Hopefully they'll help you take care of these motorcycle dudes.

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PS3: BlackSite: Area 51

NOW YOU HAVE A REASON TO THINK BEFORE YOU SHOOT

"How do we make people care about *Area 51?*" This was the question first asked by Harvey Smith, Creative Director at Midway Austin, as development began on *BlackSite: Area 51*, the next-gen sequel to 2005's surprise hit shooter. Given the subject matter, one angle would be to embrace the inherent kitsch value of the license and turn the knobs to 11 à la *Destroy All Humans!*. Another would be to continue down the path set by the first game, space marines and big-headed aliens and all. But why bother with the predictable when you can strip down the essentials to something more meaningful, even relevant to today's headlines and public opinion – *and* make it fun to play?

Smith, a veteran game designer who's worked with some of the best in the industry, never forgets the challenge of making a game, nor the fact that without a focused thesis, his game has every chance of being Sci-fi Shooter #523. "We're obviously doing a next-gen shooter, and a lot of people are doing that," he says. "Everybody's trying to do some little things that are different; in the last round, it was *Half-Life 2* doing physics. We believe very much in AI as the frontier right now – we have five AI guys working on this project." But despite what you may be thinking, the AI Smith refers to more relates to your squad than

info

AVAILABLE	Summer 2007
TYPE	Shooter
MULTIPLAYER	Yes
ONLINE	Yes
ESRB rating	Pending
PUBLISHER	Midway
MADE BY	Midway Austin

the enemy (though really, they're just as capable).

"One of the goals for the project is [to create] the most lifelike squad ever," says Smith. "So these guys take cover intelligently; they look at the tactical situation and we've tagged everything in the environment so they know [where they are]. They can lean around corners and look around. If they kneel next to you and they're taking cover, and you look at them, they head-track up, blink, and say, 'Let's go.' Besides the obvious gameplay ramifications, a "smart" squad has, being able to suspend your disbelief for even a brief moment to interact with and even *trust* your three squad mates – Yobo, Noa, and Mitchell – creates a connection that is much more human.

To further press the point home, the team has gone to incredible lengths from a visual standpoint to bring your squad to life, particularly when it comes to animations. See, depending on how you've been doing in the game, your mates will show a startling range of emotion through their posture, eye movement, and dialogue. Each character even has three distinct breathing states. All of these animations are dependent on an underlying morale system that's built into the game. "Depending on how well the player is doing, the game intelligently understands the mood of the squad," says Smith. "So they fire more aggressively and talk more aggressively and advance more aggressively if you're doing well. They fall back more, take cover more, and sound more afraid if the morale system tips the other way." This system helps keeps the visual cues consistent with the action onscreen, and also dynamically changes your squad's tactics on the fly depending on their level of confidence and courage.

Of course, there are times when intentional control will come into play for fine-tuning your tactical maneuvers. But having a complicated HUD and controls would all but destroy every effort put into immersing the player into what is to be a seamless experience. This is exactly why great effort has been put into a one-button

ALIEN NATION

We've talked about the Reborn being the main enemy in the game, but we've made little to no mention of the actual alien race you see in many of these screenshots. Actually, there's little to know about them except that they "relate" to the Reborn on some level, making them friendlies to anyone except you and your squad. When we inquired about their role in the story, it was implied to us that they simply exist and that maybe we're not supposed to know anything about them. We sense there's more to it than that, but if not, well, damn.

[illegible] ordering scheme that relies on context rather than a list of commands. "You click on a Humvee, they get in a Humvee," says Smith. "You point to a point on the ground, they take cover over there. You click on a door and they put a door charge on it and blow it open. You click on a ladder, they climb to the roof. Where this comes into gameplay tactically speaking is, say I see a corner up ahead and I kinda hear something horrible [up there]. I can click on the ground up there and my squad will advance towards the building while I can circle around the building.

This is one of the first things we prototyped and it was just magical.

While this type of strategic thinking may sound familiar to those who've played games like *Brothers in Arms*, the difference in *BlackSite* is that you're giving your squad a more general order and letting the AI assess the situation and act accordingly. Whether that means charging in guns ablaze or taking cover and shooting when open is completely up to the AI. There are sure to be some logistical problems to work out given the relatively open nature of this type of gameplay, but Smith's experience working on the two *Deus Ex* games (both of which are far more nonlinear than *BlackSite*) and his team's seemingly unquenchable thirst for challenge gives us a sense of peace at heart.

SPAWN
These fine fellas come out of that huge spire in the background.

THE STORY SO FAR

Mindless shooting has its place, but with *BlackSite*, Midway Austin hopes to bring a greater sense of meaning to it all. To begin to appreciate what's being attempted in the game, your first [illegible] to completely forget everything you know about the previous games. Then, try and imagine an *Area 51* firmly grounded in reality (for the most part). While aliens and such fall on the fantastical side of things, place them in the context of a world that could exist – one that, to many Art Bell listeners, *actually* exists.

"The kernel here is that decades ago an alien ship crashed in Area 51, the pieces of the ship were moved deep underground for R&D, and the people doing the research were given carte blanche to do whatever they wanted," says Jim Stiefelmaier, Creative Director at Midway Austin. "Under all these layers of secrecy and lack of transparency to the government, this got more and more twisted until suddenly it was okay to declassify drifters and homeless people and missing children as non-citizens, and move them down into the facility for light levels of research. Imagine if that got worse and worse and decades passed."

Enter the game's main protagonists, the Reborn. This group of organized once-human experiments is driven by the decades of angst and resentment towards the researchers, assumingly generalized as all humans from this point forward. Ultimately, you'll come face to face with their leader, though a black-and-white duel to the death is far from likely. Instead, given the ambitions of the team to create a virtual humanity, we foresee something more of an empathetic finale.

Midway Austin's approach to the game's narrative and subject matter brings to mind that of the current *Battlestar Galactica* series. The show, much like the game, is

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RANDOM
Each alien that comes out of the spire looks slightly different.

a re-imagining of an once-told tale. Similarly, both bring the extraordinary to a level much more plausible in

exchanged for bullets, characters are flawed in very real ways, and moral decisions trade up for the effective-if-reckless status quo of shooting everything that moves and breathes.

The game's environments and scenarios are actually the first indication that *BlackSite* is marching to the beat of a different drummer. The introductory level places you and your squad in a modern day war-torn Iraq with nary an alien in site. Here you're given a taste of almost everything the game has to offer in terms of firepower and chaos, only to lose it all in the next level. The main narrative then begins and takes you through the real-life town of Rachel, Nevada, and inevitably deep into the heart of a quarantined Area 51. Throughout your journey, you'll be witness to a number of subtle allusions that clearly recall the tactics and conundrums found in the world today, from suicide bombers to ethical arguments. Your three team members will even argue amongst themselves as each has a distinct world view as to what is right and wrong.

Cocooning this higher-level concept of morals and war is the game's title itself: *BlackSite*. The term is from a military lexicon and is used to refer to places that officially do not exist, for better or for worse. In today's world, the term is most often referenced in regards to secret prisons that the government allegedly has placed in a multitude of countries, their main purpose being to interrogate and torture prisoners without any legal consequences falling on the U.S. government. Given *BlackSite*'s political backdrop and the known experimentation being conducted in Area 51, you can begin to see just how far the team at Midway Austin is willing to push its ideas. Essentially, you could be playing a game that, despite its flavor for aliens and such, is a virtual manifestation of today's current events.

SUSAN O'CONNER

The name may mean little to you, but her work surely doesn't. A professional game writer if there ever was one, O'Conner cut her teeth back in the late '90s on titles like *Girl Talk* and *Ellie's Enchanted Garden*, but has since honed her skills to be the lead writer on Irrational's much-hyped *BioShock* and Epic's *Gears of War*. Oh, and *BlackSite*.

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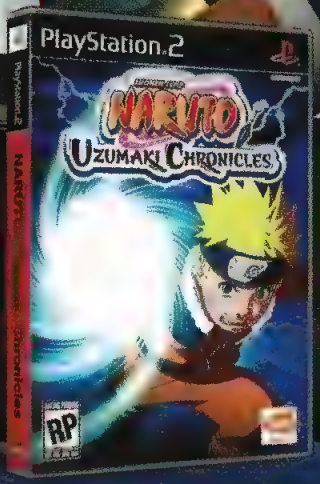

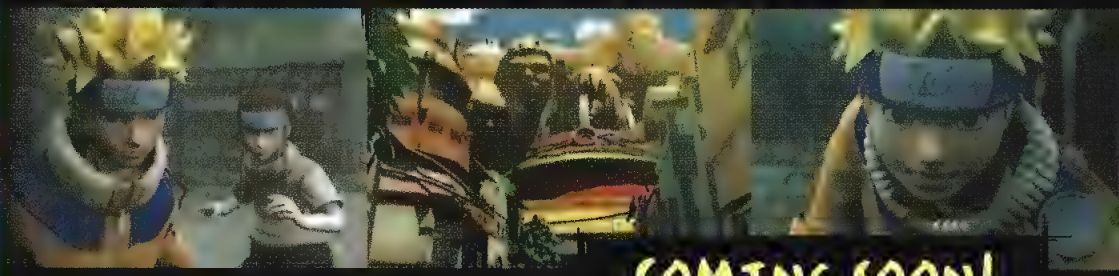

COMING SOON!

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RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB Visit www.esrb.org for updated rating information.

PlayStation 2 VIZ JUMP cavia BANDAI NAMCO Games

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→ **AQUATIC** Sea life was inspiration for the aliens.

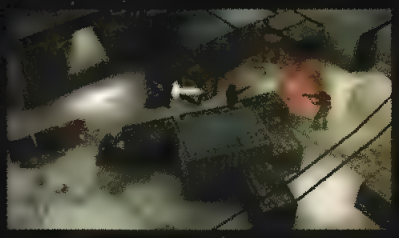
▪ 028 FUTURE PRIMITIVE

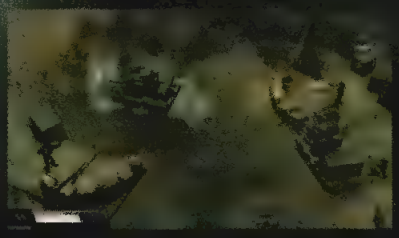
There's a lot to take in with *BlackSite: Area 51*. It's important to note that, yes, the game is a first-person shooter, and it doesn't necessarily try to reinvent the genre in any way. Rather, the team at Midway Austin is taking a more logical approach, and attempting to craft a title that's polished three times over, feels relevant in the world today, and can take its risks within the secure confines inherently found in the shooter genre itself (read: shooting is fun). With a team of truly devoted and experienced members behind the wheel, we get the feeling that our next trip to *Area 51* will feel like the first.

KAISER HWANG

EVIL KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES

THE HELGHAST ARE BACK





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PlayStation Portable

PS3:

Rogue Warrior

Most known for its landmark *Elder Scrolls* series, Bethesda is taking a break from fantasy and shifting over to the brutal world of war. Strangely relevant for current times, the game has you playing the role of a SEAL member caught in the middle of [illegible]

[illegible] Looking good.

info	
AVAILABLE	Fall 2007
PUBLISHED BY	Bethesda
MADE BY	Zombie Studios

OPEN Lots of room for some nonlinear gameplay.

[illegible]

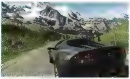
PLANET OF SOUND

[illegible]

PS3: Afrika

AVAILABLE	To Be Announced
PUBLISHED BY	Sony
MADE BY	Rhino Studios

Really, this screenshot of this mysterious PS3 game fits the title perfectly. Giving the impression of an African safari, the two trailers we've seen for the game have showcased beautiful real-time footage of animals simply living and interacting in their native habitat. We're still unsure what type of game this will be, but we do know that the man behind the *Hot Shots Golf* games is heading up the project. Random, but awesome. KAISER HWANG



PS3: Gran Turismo HD

AVAILABLE	To Be Announced
PUBLISHED BY	Sony
MADE BY	Polyphony Digital

At first a tech demo of sorts, and now Sony's poster boy for microtransactions, *Gran Turismo HD* is more or less *GT4* – only without the cars or tracks. Rather than pack the game full of content, you're given a bare bones version of the game on the cheap. You can then buy cars and tracks separately for a given price (around $.50 to $2.00, we presume). Depending on if you like your glass half full or half empty, this is either the best thing ever or, um, not. KAISER HWANG

THE NICE VERSION

Two versions of the game will be released one being the bare bones port of *GT4*, the other being a souped-up version featuring 30 cars that have been remodeled using higher polygon counts. Think of it as a glimpse of what *GT5* will look like.

PS3 Heavenly Sword

AVAILABLE	March 2007
PUBLISHED BY	Sony
MADE BY	Ninja Theory

What could be one of Sony's next big franchises, *Heavenly Sword* had a somewhat disappointing Tokyo Game Show appearance; not because the game sucks, but because the exact same demo from this year's E3 was all that was available for play. A new trailer and batch of screenshots were released, though, and only have us anticipating this *God of War*-like action title that much more. We expect big things from this sure-to-be hit. KAISER HWANG

Sound System For PSP
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PS3: MotorStorm

At E3 2005, we were amazed by the target trailer. At E3 2006, we were sorely let down by the weak graphics and so-so gameplay. Now, weeks away from the PS3's launch, *MotorStorm* has made leaps and bounds forwards, with visuals that almost live up to the hype, and gameplay that actually feels (somewhat) new. A great feature is that the grooves each vehicle makes in the mud actually change the gameplay, and affects how every other vehicle interacts on the road. It sounds pretty subtle, but we'll [illegible] imagine it to the point that you might agree.
FARIS FAKHRY

CLOSE: The graphics are [illegible] target [illegible] shown at E3 2006.

CLOSE: [illegible]

THE TRACK RECORD

[illegible]

info

AVAILABLE	November 2006
PUBLISHED BY	Sony
MADE BY	Evolution Studios

PS3 Hot Shot Golf 5

AVAILABLE	To Be Announced
PUBLISHED BY	Sony
MADE BY	Clap Hanz

A long-loved series on Sony's consoles, the *Hot Shots Golf* games are cute, fun, and... cute. You might wonder what types of "next-gen" improvements the game could utilize on the PS3. Well, after playing the game at the Tokyo Game Show, we can confirm that the game is very similar to previous iterations, albeit in high-res. We expect the game to have an extensive online feature set and utilize the online store, for better or for worse.
KAISER HWANG

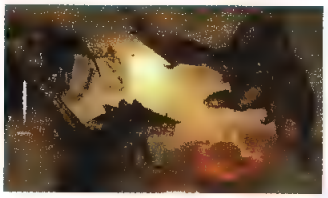
PS3 Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots

AVAILABLE	To Be Announced
PUBLISHED BY	Konami
MADE BY	Kojima Productions

Another show, another trailer. This time, though, we're given our first glimpse of actual gameplay video. Surprisingly (or not), *MGS4* looks quite similar to previous games as you hide Snake around the environment and take out enemies, often in a first-person view. As impressive as the game looks, we were a little letdown with the animations, which, while excellent in every regard, looked almost too familiar to past games.
KAISER HWANG

A SNAKE FOR YOUR ROOM

Famed Japanese toy maker, Medicom, is creating a limited edition, 12" model of Snake for Japan. The company did the same thing for *Snake Eater*, and fans ate it up. Expect to pay upwards of $200 if you want to score one.



PS3 Lair

AVAILABLE	To Be Announced
PUBLISHED BY	Sony
MADE BY	Factor 5

The house that *Star Wars* built is trading in the X-Wings for dragons with *Lair*, Factor 5's PS3-exclusive action title. As is fairly obvious, you control a large dragon and fly around a medieval world, fighting other dragons and stomping on helpless hordes of soldiers. Besides the game's stunning visuals, it's worth noting that you control the dragon using the PS3 controller's tilt sensor. While not super sensitive to every little movement you make, it definitely gets the job done.
KAISER HWANG

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Luke fon Fabre, sole heir to a family of aristocrats was kidnapped seven years ago, and the shock left him with no memories of his life before. He has since led a quiet, boring life within the family's residence, learning little of the world beyond the palace walls. Suddenly thrust into the outside world, Luke is caught in the workings of the Order of Lorelei, keepers of the prophecy known as the Score. No longer sheltered by the palace, Luke must get along in the confusing and often hostile world. He knows nothing about those who might be his friends, or those who already are his enemies. He has not yet noticed the evil that is drawing close to him.

TEEN T ESRB
Alcohol Reference
Fantasy Violence
Language
Simulated Gambling
Suggestive Themes

PlayStation®2

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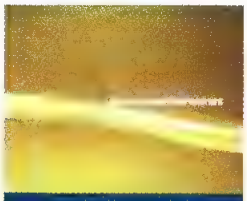
news

POWERING ON PS3

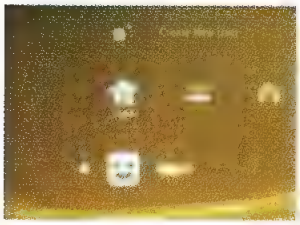
Getting to know Sony's amazing new system, feature by feature

Just weeks before the initial batch of 400,000 PS3s were scheduled to ship to stores across the country, we finally got to try out a near-finished version of the console's Cross Media Bar menu (XMB). Not all of the options and features planned for the final launch hardware were present, but the system's core functionality was intact for our tour. As we've previously reported, PSP owners will immediately be at home with the menu's layout, but there is much more here to examine and utilize than on the handheld. Just take a look... CHRIS SLATE



SYSTEM START UP
Touching the body heat-sensitive power icon brings up the words "Sony Computer Entertainment," while an orchestra warms up. Simple and elegant.

PS3's XMB Menu Explained



USERS

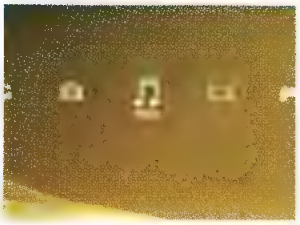
Every gamer in the house can have his or her own unique user profile (which is stored to the hard drive) that contains their preferred system settings and more. To identify user profiles, players can choose from a long list of images such as cartoon characters and other iconic pictures. The PS3 automatically starts up under the last user profile that was used (the controller's PS button can be held after boot-up to cancel the auto log-in).

SETTINGS

The long list of options here include System Update, Date and Time (the background color changes daily, and even becomes lighter and darker as the sun rises and sets), Accessory Settings (used to register Bluetooth devices like the controller), camera test for the old and new EyeToy cameras, keyboard and mouse settings, video and sound settings, parental controls for movies and web browsing, and network (online) settings.

PHOTO

The PS3 can view or download photos from various devices, such as a Flash Card, Memory Stick (directly or through a PSP), or straight from digital camera via USB. There are basic photo viewing options, such as a slideshow with slow camera zooms and music, plus a fancier mode that displays your shots as actual photos scattered about a table. Plus, more types of slideshows will be available for download at some point.

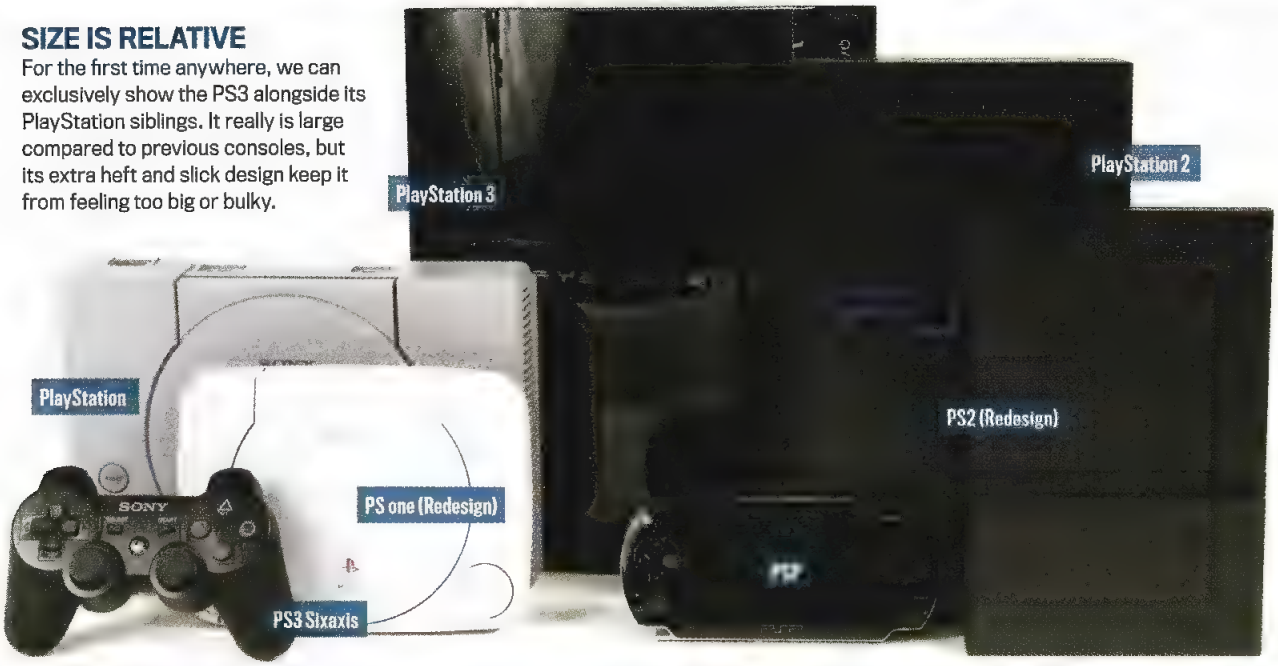


MUSIC

You can rip tracks from a CD to store on the PS3's hard drive, or pull tunes off a Memory Stick (either directly or through a PSP using a USB connection). The console can play MP3 files as well as the iTunes and ATRAC music formats, although direct USB iPod support hasn't yet been confirmed. The system also comes loaded with different music visualizers (such as a pool of primordial orange goo), and more can be downloaded at a later date.

SIZE IS RELATIVE

For the first time anywhere, we can exclusively show the PS3 alongside its PlayStation siblings. It really is large compared to previous consoles, but its extra heft and slick design keep it from feeling too big or bulky.



VIDEO

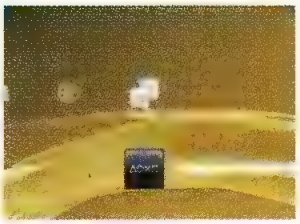
The video stored under this setting can be displayed in standard definition, 480p, 720p, 1080i, or glorious 1080p. You can access clips from a Memory Stick just as you would on a PSP, but with a 20GB or 60GB hard drive built-in, why would you want to cram movies anywhere else? The PS3 will also accept video through a USB connection with other external devices, and, obviously, it will play movies from a DVD or Blu-ray Disc.

GAME

Highlight the game disc under this category and you're treated to custom wallpaper, just like on the PSP. Here you can also manage game saves on the hard drive, or off PS one and PS2 Memory Cards via an adapter.

NETWORK

This is where you can launch the console's custom web browser or enter Sony's PlayStation Store (symbolized by a little gift bag bearing the square, triangle, circle, and X marks). Here, Sony will offer a large and ever-growing variety of downloadable items. Each of the system's launch games should have content ready for download on day one, plus Sony will sell simpler original games at prices much less than full games go for in stores.



FRIENDS

After first hooking up your PS3, the first thing you'll want to do is sign up for Sony's free PlayStation Network. Once you have a network account, you can create a friends list and keep track of who's online or not. You can also chat with your pals using a headset, send them email, and more. Your PlayStation Network login links to stat tracking in any games that you play online, so hold off putting in *Resistance* until you get properly set up.

METAL GEAR SECTION

REVEALED: BIG BOSS'S NEW NEMESIS!

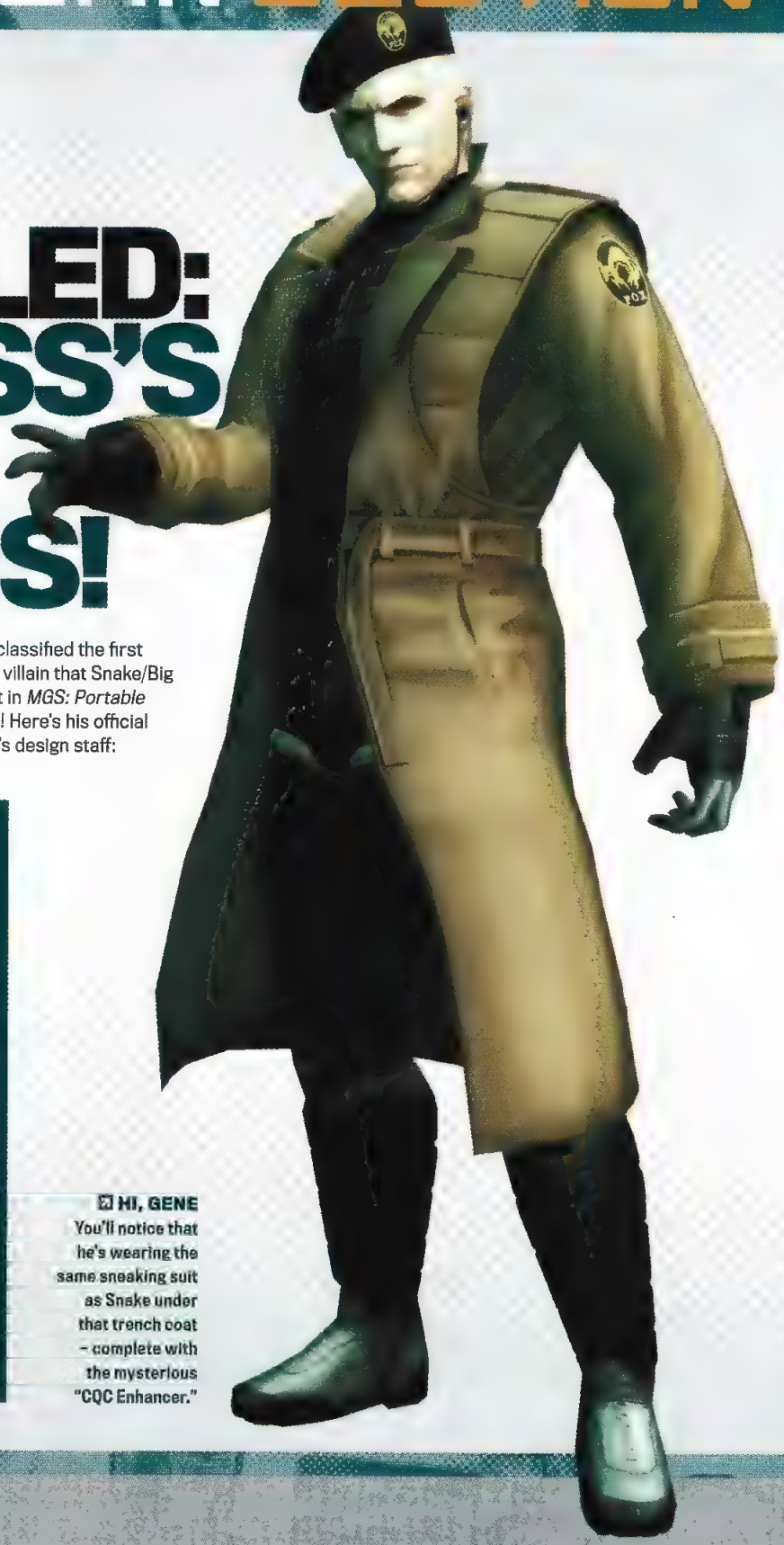
Kojima Productions has declassified the first image and info for the main villain that Snake/Big Boss will square off against in *MGS: Portable Ops* – just for PSM readers! Here's his official bio, straight from the game's design staff:

MGS: Portable Ops CHARACTER PROFILE: GENE

"Appearing out of nowhere, Gene has taken command of a Columbian missile base, inspired its crew with talk of independence, and now stands as the new leader of FOX.

Armed with the latest evolution of Metal Gear, Gene threatens to launch a nuclear warhead into the Soviet Union in order to solidify the political stance of his visionary military state.

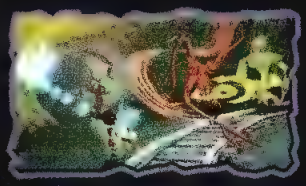
But unbeknownst to most of the players in this political theatre, Big Boss's presence in Gene's newly procured territory is no mere coincidence..."



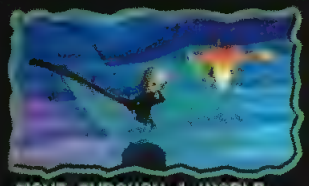
▸ HI, GENE You'll notice that he's wearing the same sneaking suit as Snake under that trench coat – complete with the mysterious "CQC Enhancer."

IF THERE'S ONE THING YOU LEARN WHEN YOU ARE A KID...
IT'S TO NEVER GO INTO THE FOREST...

ALONE

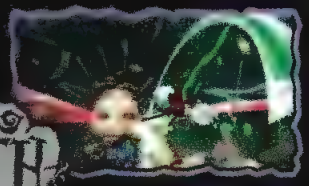


PLAY THROUGH STORY MODE AS DJ AND PANDORA WITH 2 PLAYER CO-OPERATIVE PLAY



FIGHT THROUGH A WORLD OF SCIENCE PROJECTS GONE WRONG

DEATH STRIKES TWICE!



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Root of Evil

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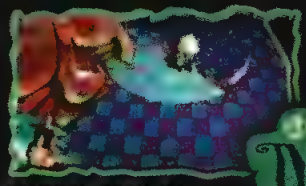

CONTROL BOTH DJ AND PANDORA IN THEIR FIRST NINTENDO DS ADVENTURE

DEATH JR.™

COMING SPRING '07 FOR NINTENDO DS

PRODUCTS RANGE FROM RATING PENDING TO TEEN
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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SQUARE ENIX CIRCLE

FINAL FANTASY XII FOR FREE?

One of this year's biggest games gets unofficially released in the wild

By the time you read this, the U.S. version of *Final Fantasy XII* should be on store shelves already, but some unscrupulous gamers have already been playing it since the beginning of October. Yes, the real deal – the whole game, with all of the English dialogue, a full month early.

The game was made available via bit torrent, and a link to the torrent was on the popular news site, digg.com, which served as an advertisement for the torrent more than anything else. People were quick to start downloading and uploading (or leeching and seeding, as it's known) the file before Square Enix took legal action (to what extent remains unknown at this time) and shut the torrents down. Unfortunately, given the vastness of the Internet, it seems unlikely that they managed to completely stop the piracy of the game.

How did this happen? No one except the person(s) who put it online knows for sure. Different magazines and websites got reviewable builds of the game (obviously we here at PSM got a build, as we reviewed the game in our October issue), so it could have come from any number of sources – including from someone at Square Enix itself.

Regardless of origin, this case is yet another example – a big one, no less – of gaming piracy, which is something that the industry has been growingly concerned about, especially given the wide availability of pirated games online. Can we expect it to steadily increase as time goes on? Perhaps, but considering the cost and size of the PlayStation 3's Blu-ray media, it seems less likely in the immediate future.

JUSTIN CHENG

BE NOBUO UEMATSU

Or close to it, anyway, thanks to a site called "Ichigo's Sheet Music," which has, well, sheet music of various series, including *Final Fantasy*. See more at http://ichigos.com/sheets.shtml. We'd love to hear your renditions of *Final Fantasy* music!

PIMP YOUR DESKTOP

So you're a *Final Fantasy* fan and you just want to saturate your entire world with all things *Final Fantasy*? Well, here's a great *Final Fantasy XI* desktop theme for Windows XP. You can get it here: www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/desktop/finalfantasy.mspx.

WHAT IF YOUR ACTIONS IN A GAME CHANGED THE COURSE OF YOUR REALITY?

Something strange is occurring in the online video game "The World." There are phenomena occurring in The World that go against in-game laws. Players who die in the game are feeling the effects in reality.

Assume the role of Haseo, and start a dangerous journey to uncover the truth. Fight Player Killers, create parties, join guilds, and develop new hacking skills. Find the mysterious Tri-Edge, seek revenge, and reveal the truth.

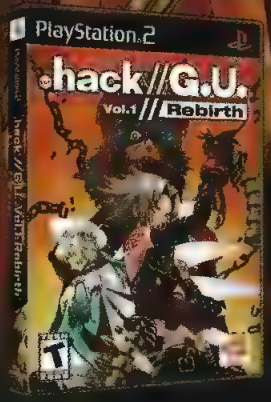
You are Haseo, The Terror of Death.

Welcome to The World.

CUSTOMIZABLE WEAPONS

EPIC, ORIGINAL STORYLINE

HEART-STOPPING BATTLES



IN STORES NOW!

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TEEN T Fantasy Violence Language

PlayStation 2

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GTA CENTRAL

THE VICE CITY STORIES SOUNDTRACK UNVEILED

All the music tracks from VCS for your perusal

ROCK OUT
Even when you're on a JetSki.

V-ROCK
"Holy Diver" - Dio
"Queen of the Reich" - Queensryche
"Lick It Up" - KISS
"Breaking the Chains" - Dokken
"All I'm Gonna Take" - Autograph
"Balls to the Wall" - Accept
"Rock You Like A Hurricane" - Scorpions
"Long Stick Goes Boom" - Krokus
"Stranglehold" - Ted Nugent
"Round and Round" - Ratt
"Electric Eye" - Judas Priest
"Looks that Kill" - Motley Crue
"Metal Health" - Quiet Riot

FLASH FM
"Gloria" - Laura Branigan
"Human Touch" - Rick Springfield
"The One Thing" - INXS
"Easy Lover" - Phil Collins & Philip Bailey
"The Warrior" - Scandal
"Love Resurrection" - Alison Moyet
"Games People Play" - Alan Parsons Project
"Family Man" - Hall & Oates
"Love Is A Battlefield" - Pat Benatar
"Wouldn't It Be Good" - Nik Kershaw
"Together in Electric Dreams" - Phil Oakley & Giorgio Moroder
"It's My Life" - Talk Talk
"Destination Unknown" - Missing Persons
"Don't Let Go" - Wang Chung
"Apaloosa" - Gino Vanelli
"Turn It On Again" - Genesis
"Living On The Ceiling" - Blancmange
"Come Back and Stay" - Paul Young

IN THE GAME TONIGHT
One thing we couldn't talk about until now is that Phil Collins is actually in *VCS*. You can help him out in the single player mode, and you can actually unlock him as a playable character in the multiplayer mode.

EMOTION 98.3
"Only The Lonely" - Motels
"I'm Not In Love" - 10cc
"Harden My Heart" - Quarterflash
"Make Believe" - Toto
"Fool If You Think It's Over" - Elkie Brooks
"I'm in Love with a German Film Star" - The Passions
"I Want To Know What Love Is" - Foreigner
"Never, Never" - The Assembly
"We Belong" - Pat Benatar
"Private Life" - The Pretenders
"In The Air Tonight" - Phil Collins
"Avalon" - Roxy Music
"Baby Hold On" - Eddie Money
"Stone Cold" - Rainbow
"Call To The Heart" - Gulffra
"Moments In Love" - Art of Noise
"I Can Dream About You" - Dan Hartman

FRESH FM
"Renegades of Funk" - Afrika Bambattaa
"Pack Jam" - Jonzun Crew
"It's Like That" - Run DMC
"Play it at Your Own Risk" - Planet Patrol
"Egypt Egypt" - Egyptian Lover
"Beatbox" - Art of Noise
"Boogie Down Bronx" - Man Parrish
"Request Line" - Rockmaster Scott
"Freak-a-zoid" - Midnight Star
"Freaks Come Out at Night" - Whodini

PARADISE FM
"I Hear Music In The Streets" - Unlimited Touch
"Everyway But Loose" - Plunky and the Oneness of Juju
"Can't Fake The Feeling" - Geraldine Hunt
"Do It To The Music" - Raw Silk
"Is It In" - Jimmy Bo Horne
"Together Forever" - Exodus
"This Time Baby" - Jackie Moore
"Weekend" - Class Action
"It Should Have Been You" - Gwen Guthrie
"You Used To Hold Me So Tight" - Thelma Houston
"Lost In Music" - Sister Sledge
"Love Has Come Around" - Donald Byrd
"Glow of Love" - Change

VC LOVERS
"Sexual Healing" - Marvin Gaye
"Fantasy" - Earth Wind & Fire
"It Started With A Kiss" - Hot Chocolate
"Mary Jane" - Rick James
"Nightshift" - The Commodores
"Mambo" - Wally Badarou
"I'm In Ecstasy When You Lay Down Next To Me" - Barry White
"Can't Turn Me Away" - Sylvia Striplin
"Everybody Loves The Sunshine" - Roy Ayers
"Risin' To The Top" - Keni Burke
"Love TKO" - Teddy Pendergrass

WAVE 103
"Love Action" - Human League
"Love On Your Side" - Thompson Twins
"Everything Counts" - Depeche Mode
"Heart of Glass" - Blondie
"Relax" - Frankie Goes To Hollywood
"How To Be A Millionaire" - ABC
"Blue Monday" - New Order
"Quiet Life (Extended Version)" -Japan
"Too Shy (Midnight Mix)" - Kajagoogoo
"Penthouse and Pavement" - Heaven 17
"Sex (I'm A...)" - Berlin
"Like To Get To Know You Well" - Howard Jones
"A Forest" - Cure
"Space Age Love Song" - A Flock of Seagulls
"Don't Go" - Yaz

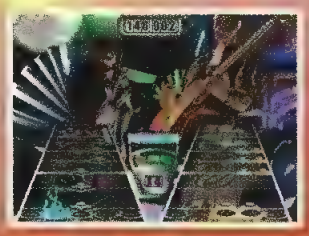
RADIO ESPANTOSO
"Acid" - Ray Barretto
"I Like It Like That" - Pete El Conde Rodriguez
"Ove Como" - Tito Puente
"Mi Ritmo Es Bueno" - Bobby Valentin
"Quimbara" - Celia & Johnny
"Mi Gente" - Hector Lavoe
"Revolt La Libertad Logico" - Eddie Palmieri
"El Malo" - Willie Colon

Live like a mortal. Rock like a God.

Mark, 19
Cashier

Stephen, 23
Accountant

Available November 7



www.guitarherogame.com

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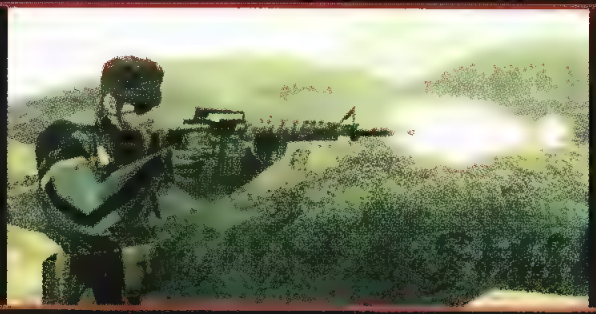
TAKE SNAKE ON HIS LATEST MISSION IN THE SEQUEL TO MGS3: SNAKE EATER OR BATTLE YOUR FRIENDS ONLINE IN EXCLUSIVE MULTIPLAYER MODES.



MATURE 17+

M

Animated Blood
Suggestive Themes
Violence

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PlayStation Portable

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Available
In Stores
Nov. 17th

Legend tells of a time of dragons and Dragon Riders who
brought peace and prosperity to Alagaësia.
Now, in a time of darkness under the villainous rule of Galbatorix,
destiny has chosen a new hero.
The legend will live again.

eragon™

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PSP® (PlayStation®Portable) system

Overpower foes with a deep combat system, featuring grapples, combos and devastating magic attacks.

Combine forces with Brom and Murtagh any time in two-player, drop-in/drop-out, co-op mode.

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20th CENTURY FOX

SIERRA

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PSM's HOLIDAY BUYER'S GUIDE 2006

It's that time of the year again, when hundreds of new games beckon you to buy them with your hard-earned cash. We've played them all here at PSM, and whittled the list down to only the best in order to save you the pain of looking through countless reviews (or relying on – *gasp!* – store clerks). We've picked our 10 highest recommendations, along with the top games for all three PlayStation platforms – all the info you need to make this holiday season a gamer's dream come true. RANDY NELSON

1

RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN

Our production schedule prevented us from getting a full review in this issue, but, suffice to say, *Resistance* is simply amazing. It's not just a superb first-person shooter, it's the killer app for PS3, showing off the system's potential – it's almost worth buying the system for alone. The biggest game of the year, by far.

PS3

2

OKAMI

Though it gets off to an unusually slow start, *Okami* quickly becomes one of the greatest quests any gamer has ever taken. The gameplay is truly inspired for an action-adventure; the Celestial Brush is one of the best new gameplay mechanics in years. This game will be revered for generations to come.

PS2

3

FINAL FANTASY XII

FFXII is much more than just an "offline MMORPG;" it's a beautifully crafted RPG with an enormous world to explore, gorgeous graphics, and a story that makes 40 hours seem like no time at all.

PS2

THE TEN GAMES YOU MUST OWN

...OR, (AHEM) GIVE TO SOMEONE ELSE, NO MATTER WHICH PLAYSTATION YOU HAVE

4 GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES

Vice City Stories may be the best PSP game we've played so far. It's got everything a *GTA* game should have, and more – and it's portable. All the upgrades make it leaps and bounds better than *Liberty City Stories*. If you have a PSP, you *must* buy this game; if you don't have a PSP, buy one just to play it.

PSP

5 GUITAR HERO II

Pure fun – that's the best way to describe *Guitar Hero II*. Its song list is sure to please almost everyone, and while not much has changed in the way of presentation, new additions – including the handy practice mode and absolutely addictive co-op play – make this a worthy sequel to the best music game ever produced.

PS2

6 TEKKEN: DARK RESUR-RECTION

Tekken: Dark Resurrection is easily the best fighting game that PSP has to offer. It's simply gorgeous and has most of the stuff from *Tekken 5* with a few cool extras thrown in for good measure.

PSP

7 KINGDOM HEARTS II

Few games can be described as magical, but this is definitely one of them. In combining characters and worlds from both Disney and Square Enix, then tossing in some solid, if simple, combat and heartfelt moments, it's a love letter to fans of both companies' years of work.

PS2

8 TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND

Aside from a couple of rough spots, *Legend* is a shining example of what the series should have been all these past years. It feels fresh, and it feels right. It's great to finally see Lara kick ass again.

PS2

9 YAKUZA

Only somewhat marred by long load times, an English dub, and a laughable amount of profanity, *Yakuza* succeeds at giving you a taste of the Japanese underworld with its captivating story, RPG-like elements, and badass main character.

PS2

10 LOCOROCO

Funky, fresh, and fun, this is PSP's most original title to date. Its unique controls and visuals will charm you, and its catchy tunes will stick in your head. It can be frustrating at times, but it always manages to put a smile on your face.

PSP

NEXT: PSP GAMES TO BUY >050

THE BEST PS2 GAMES TO BUY

YOUR PS2 STILL HAS THE BEST SET OF GAMES AVAILABLE ON EARTH

BULLY

Use your fists and wits to survive in this free-roaming schoolyard adventure from the publishers of *Grand Theft Auto*.

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

For fans of "real" fighting, it doesn't get any better than this.

FINAL FANTASY XII

Not just the biggest RPG event of 2006, but also one of the best installments in the classic series.

GUITAR HERO II

This supreme music game will have you staying up all night and waking up the neighbors until well into 2007.

GOD HAND

Simply the best pure beat-'em-up released in years.

HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY

Being a cold-hearted killer is surprisingly fun and funny.

KINGDOM HEARTS II

The worlds of Square Enix and Disney collide for another incredibly enjoyable action-RPG with plenty of fan service.

MADDEN NFL 07

The only choice for pro football fans – thankfully, it's a good one.

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SUBSISTENCE

The best game on PS2, with a better camera and an entirely new online mode.

NARUTO: ULTIMATE NINJA

It's not a traditional fighter, but that's good! The manga comes to life with over-the-top moves and excellent multiplayer.

NBA 2K7

The most realistic hoops sim this season.

LOTS OF FUN FOR LITTLE CASH

2006 saw the induction of some truly amazing games into PS2's Greatest Hits line of budget titles. Our top picks:

1. Devil May Cry 3: Special Edition
2. Shadow of the Colossus
3. Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition Remix

NEXT: MORE PS2 GAMES TO BUY ➔052

ROCKSTAR GAMES
PRESENTS

BULLY

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TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Crude Humor
Language
Sexual Themes
Use of Alcohol and Tobacco
Violence

PlayStation.2

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< MORE PS2 GAMES TO BUY

NHL 2K7

Narrowly manages to put the competition from EA Sports on ice.

OKAMI

The greatest, most clever, and most beautiful adventure you'll ever play on PS2.

OUTRUN 2006: COAST TO COAST

Pure arcade racing fun that's great for quick pick-up-and-play sessions.

SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT

PS2's most realistic spy series takes a compelling turn, making you play both sides.

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA ANTHOLOGY

Street Fighter Alpha 3's the best of the bunch, not to mention one of the best 2D fighters ever.

SUPER DBZ

Another anime fighter on the list? Hey, when it plays like *Street Fighter II* in true 3D, it's worthy of its spot.

RARE WARE

Looking to treat yourself (or another deserving gamer) to something *really* special? Then why not go for the gusto and track down a couple of the most rare (and best) games ever released for PS2. Specifically, we're talking about the Limited (and we mean *limited*) Edition of *Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence*, which frequently goes for more than $100 on eBay, or Sega's exquisite music-shooter *REZ* – usually listed at a more reasonable $30, despite not being seen new in stores for eons.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 07

No huge enhancements over last year, but still the king of the fairway.

TOCA RACE DRIVER 3

The best racing simulation of '06, hands-down.

TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND

Lara Croft returns to true form in this epic that combines clever puzzles and blistering action.

VALKYRIE PROFILE 2: SILMERIA

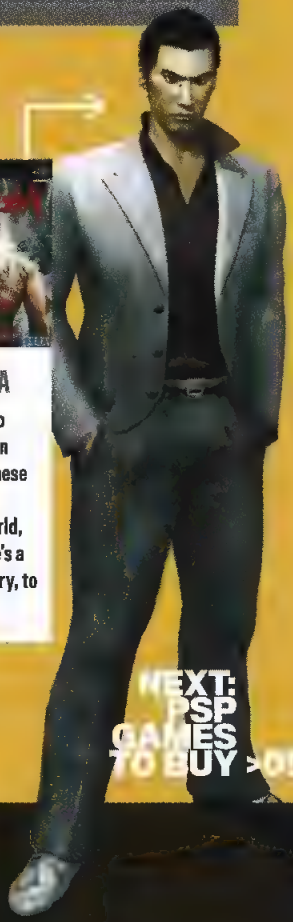
The most visually mesmerizing RPG on PS2, with a great story and combat system to back up the eye candy.

WORLD SOCCER WINNING ELEVEN 9

The World Cup is over, but Konami's soccer phenom keeps the sport alive year round.

YAKUZA

You get to kick ass in the Japanese criminal underworld, and there's a great story, to boot.



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PRODUCTS RANGE FROM TEEN TO MATURE
T-M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE

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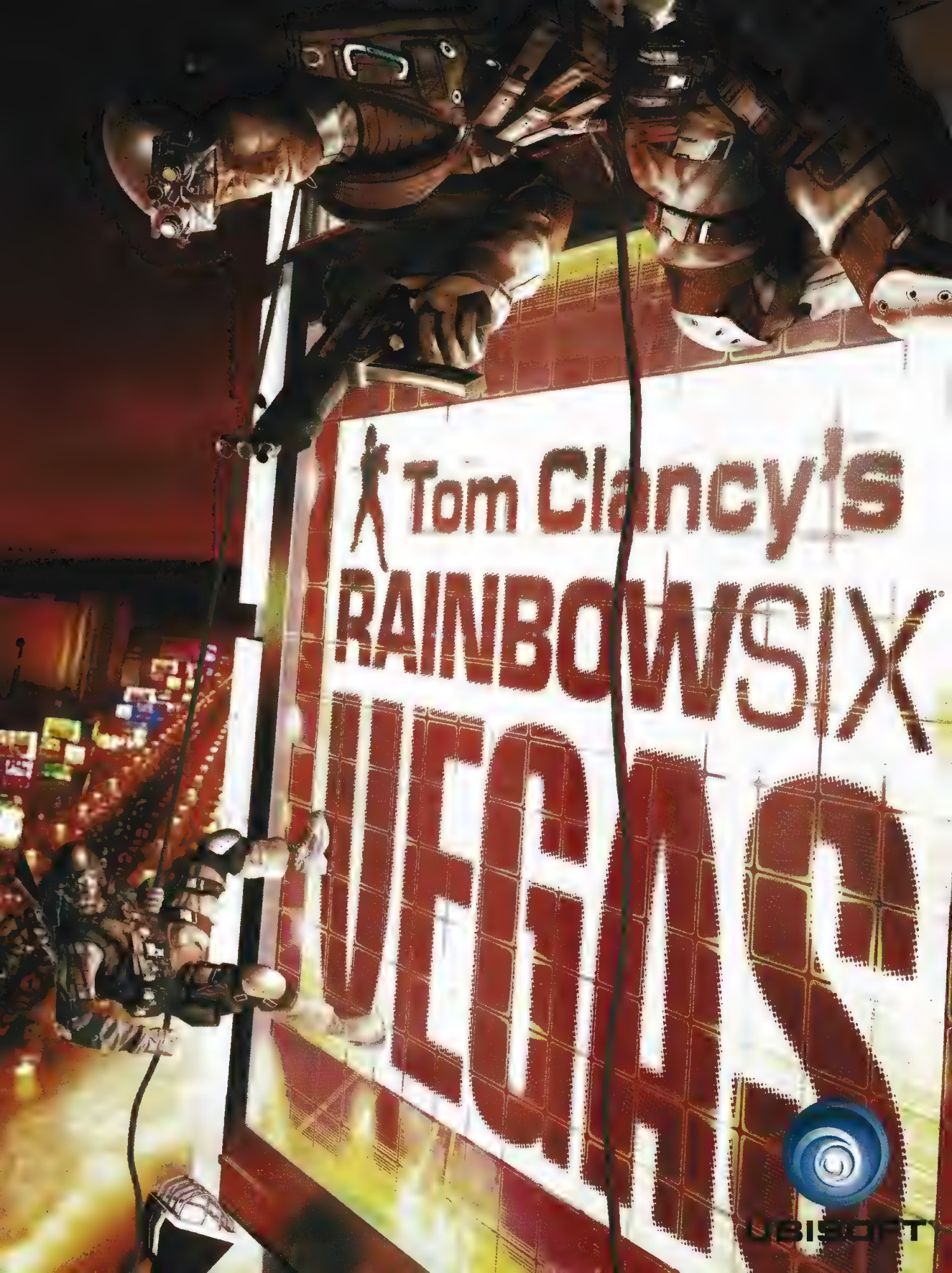
Tom Clancy's
RAINBOW SIX
LOCKDOWN
UBISOFT

THE BEST PSP GAMES TO BUY

STUFF A STOCKING WITH GAMES A' ROCKING

CAPCOM CLASSICS COLLECTION RELOADED

Street Fighter II, the *Ghosts 'N Goblins* series, and more make this an awesome set.

DAXTER

Jak's little buddy stars in this spin-off adventure that's worthy of being part of one of PS2's best platfomer franchises.

FIELD COMMANDER

Your little system will be home to some large scale warfare when you pop this primo strategy game in.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY STORIES

One of the best action-adventures ever, and you can carry it anywhere.

LOCOROCO

Don't let the cuteness fool you: there's plenty of serious challenge in this unique, PSP-exclusive platforming adventure.

LUMINES II

One of the best puzzle games since *Tetris* gets bigger and adds full-motion graphics, along with new licensed music tracks.

MEGA MAN: POWERED UP

This platformer's cute looks hide a truly challenging game that's brimming with classic fun.

METAL GEAR ACID 2

Stealth meets turn-based strategy in this awesome, uniquely stylized spin-off of the famous action series.

OUTRUN 2006: COAST TO COAST

Pure, unadulterated arcade racing fun awaits in this challenge-packed retro update.

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3 MAX

One of the truly great 2D fighters is jam-packed with characters and depth.

TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION

This upgrade of *Tekken 5* is easily the best-looking PSP game we've seen since launch.

ULTIMATE GHOSTS 'N GOBLINS

The arcade classic returns with more weapons, power-ups, and crazy difficulty.

VALKYRIE PROFILE: LENNETH

The classic PS one RPG is back, combining traditional elements with platforming for one amazing time.

NEXT: PS3 GAMES TO BUY >000

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PlayStation® Portable

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THE BEST PS3 GAMES TO BUY

...IF YOU ARE LUCKY ENOUGH TO OWN A PS3 THIS YEAR, MR. FANCYPANTS

THE ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION

Yes, it's the RPG your Xbox 360-owning friends have been rubbing in your face for months. Now it's on PS3, and you can get ready for it to eat your life with its insanely huge quest and replay possibilities introduced by countless side treks.

FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 3

Even more realistic looking than the Xbox 360 version, *Round 3* hits PS3 with a new first-person gameplay mode that's probably the closest you will ever want to get to actually being the in the ring with a real boxer.

MOTOR-STORM

Downright crazy offroad racing with all sorts of all-terrain vehicles and relentless opponent AI. MotorStorm promises to be not just one of the prettiest racers ever, but the most thrilling, as vehicles create ruts in the dirt and vie for the top spot using any means necessary.

RESIS-TANCE: FALL OF MAN

Sony's pushing this as *the* big PS3 launch game, and not without good reason. Developer Insomniac Games has a tremendous track record for making great games, and from all of our play time, Resistance is set to be its best. This sci-fi FPS really shows what the PS3 is capable of – graphics, sound, and, just as important, online play. If you can get a PS3 on day one, and can only get one game, make this it.

RIDGE RACER 7

For pure arcade-style racing thrills, *Ridge Racer* has never disappointed. The seventh installment in the series should be no exception. Running at 1080p at 60fps, it's fast and sharp, if not a bit basic looking for a PS3 game. Still, the promise of car customization and online racing clubs should make this one fun for weeks, or months, after launch day.

WHICH HDMI CABLE IS BEST?

The folks at the store will tell you "The most expensive one." The real answer? Any of them, even the $15 ones. HDMI is a digital signal transmission standard, meaning it either works or it doesn't. Stores will try to cash in on perceived naivety about all things HD, so don't get played!

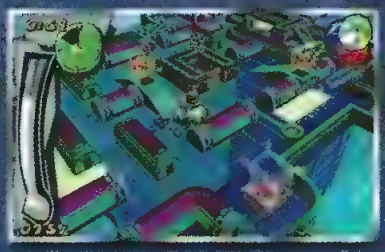
THE END– HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

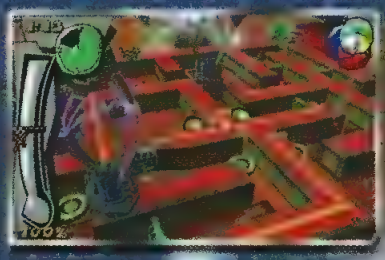
MERCURY MELTDOWN

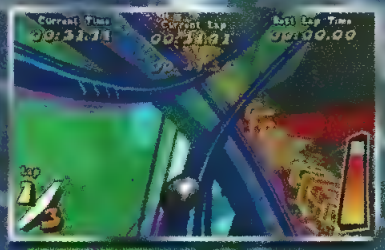
1. MOVE THE JOYSTICK

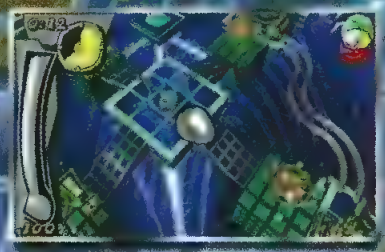
2. TILT THE TRAY

3. AIM FOR GOAL!









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PSP PlayStation Portable

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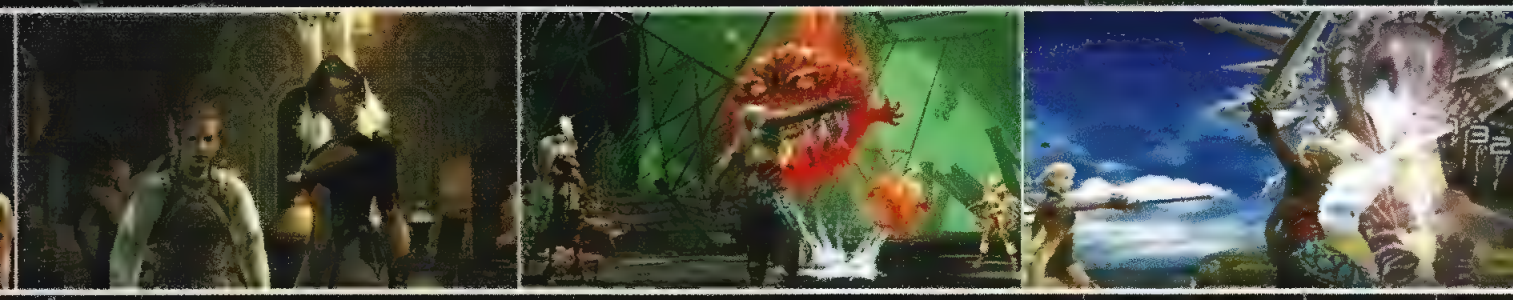
THAT WILL UNRAVEL AN EMPIRE.



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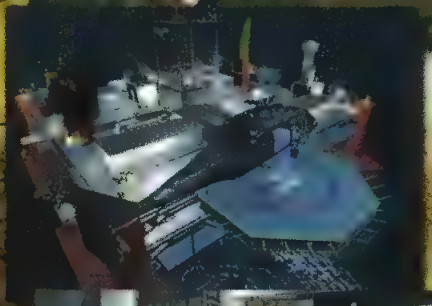

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TEEN
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Mild Language
Violence
Blood
Drug Reference
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

Black Hawk Down

POWERED BY gamespy

PlayStation 2

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EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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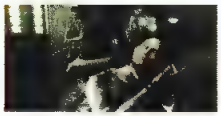
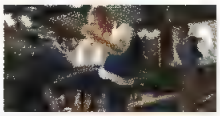
GAME OF THE MONTH

GUITAR HERO II

The Best of the Month



Splinter Cell: Double Agent ▸ 072



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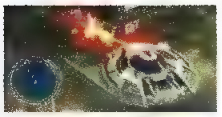

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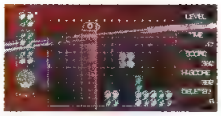

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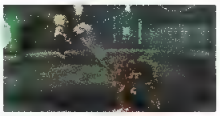

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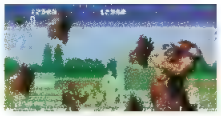


Sega Genesis Collection ▸ 080

Tiger Woods PGA 07 (PS2) ▸ 081

Tiger Woods PGA 07 (PSP) ▸ 081

PSM Scores Explained

PSM SCORE 10 out of 10 — LEGENDARY
A masterpiece we'll remember for years to come.

PSM SCORE 9.0 out of 10 — OUTSTANDING
One of the best games you'll play all year.

PSM SCORE 8.0 out of 10 — GREAT
As good as you can normally expect – buy it!

PSM SCORE 7.0 out of 10 — GOOD
A fun game that's well worth playing.

PSM SCORE 6.0 out of 10 — OKAY
An average experience in every way.

PSM SCORE 5.0 out of 10 — RISKY
Even fans of the series/genre should beware.

PSM SCORE 4.0 out of 10 — FOUR AND BELOW
Games in this tier range from bad to absolutely worthless. They're really not worth your time, and definitely not worth your money. Anything below a three isn't worth renting, even for laughs.

PSM SCORE 3.0 out of 10

PSM SCORE 2.0 out of 10

PSM SCORE 1.0 out of 10

How We Review

Nobody knows PlayStation games like PSM – our experts have reviewed every one of them for the past 10 years. To help you quickly separate the best from the rest, we spotlight our "Best of the Month" titles with feature coverage. Big review or small, we play every game through to the end to give you the most accurate analysis. Finally, our independent status is your guarantee that our opinions aren't influenced by any corporate bias. We appreciate your trust, and we'll never steer you wrong.

GAME OF THE MONTH

CO-OP ROCK
Teaming with a friend makes for max replayability.

i info

PRICE	$49.99 ($79.99 with guitar controller)
ESRB RATING	Teen
MULTIPLAYER	2-player co-op and versus
SUPPORTS	•Widescreen •Progressive Scan •Pro Logic II
PUBLISHED BY	Activision / RedOctane
MADE BY	Harmonix / WaveGroup

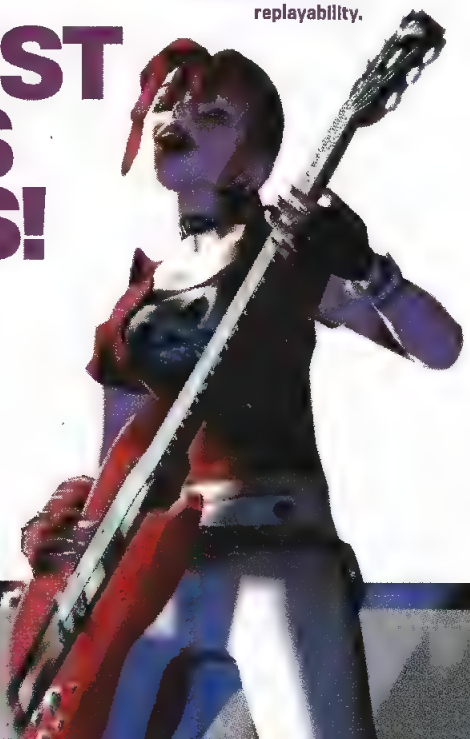
PS2: Guitar Hero II

WE CAN'T RESIST SAYING IT: THIS SEQUEL ROCKS!

Ever since the original *Guitar Hero* jumped on stage, kicked over the amps belonging to every music game that'd come before it, and rocked our mother-loving socks off, gamers of all types and degrees of musical proficiency have been chanting "Encore!"

The time has finally arrived. The house lights have dimmed. *Guitar Hero* is back, and it's a repeat performance that will have you thanking the rock gods.

Anyone who picked up RedOctane's Gibson SG controller



and rocked out the first time around will feel immediately at home once *GH2* loads up. The presentation is nearly exact, but refined and updated just enough to let you know this isn't just some kind of expansion pack (hey, it even remembers your name for high score entry in quick play mode, a tiny detail omitted in the first game). For the uninitiated... where on Earth have you been? Seriously though, if for whatever reason (and it'd better be good) you never played the first game, prepare to be immersed in a game that screams "I wanna rock!" from the opening licks of its intro video to every facet of the presentation.

But that's enough about that. What's important is that the game and the songs carry on the legacy of auditory awesomeness left by the first game – and it does.

You can't please everyone. After all, music lovers are as diverse in their tastes as music itself is in styles. *GH2* presents a wide swathe of guitar-driven music, from well-known classics to the more obscure. Things kick off with the pure metal of Mötley Crüe and eventually bop around the spectrum to include the surf sound of Dick Dale and the Top 40 pop of The Police. From Megadeth to Guns N' Roses, all of the big acts are mostly accounted for.

STAR POWER Build it up, unleash it, and show off crazy moves!

However, and we have to agree, it's become an oft-heard phrase since the first incomplete song listing was released: the game has a lot of the bands you want, but not necessarily the songs of theirs you want. Don't get us wrong: the songs are great. It just gets back to the old "you can't please all the people all the time" adage.

The game is sure to please – and then some – in almost every respect, however. At first look, it's nearly indistinguishable from the original, but, as you play, you start noticing the improved detail of the characters and venues, not to mention all of the added effects, both visual and audible. Of course, you'll notice this only when (or if) you take your eyes off the "notes" coming your way.

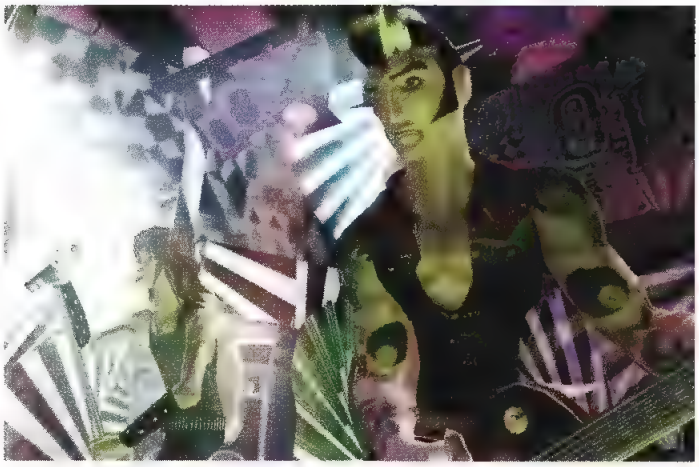
There's no dancing around the fact that *GH2*, like its predecessor, is a challenging game – but that's one of its many charms. This sequel only makes this point clearer by offering songs that are longer and more complex, even on Easy difficulty. That's why one of the biggest additions to this sequel is so awesome: the practice mode. It enables you to play any of the songs free of crowd noise, but, more importantly, lets you tackle specific parts of a song, and even slow the song down. Trust us, unless you're a videogame guitar prodigy, this mode's not only nice, it's a necessity if you're even going to consider playing the game on Expert difficulty.

Now we arrive at the biggest and definitely the best addition to *GH2*; the thing that will keep you playing long after you've mastered the final song on Expert: cooperative play.

Taking on a buddy in a head-to-head duel in *GH1* was fun, but it can't hold a candle – strike that, a lighter – to teaming up with said buddy to tackle a song together. Every song in the game has either a lead and bass or lead and rhythm variation for this very purpose. While we'd have loved it if you could tackle career mode with a partner, there's no denying that this element of the game gives it tremendous longevity. Of course, it's also likely to sour a few friendships, since your score is combined, as is the accumulation of Star Power, which must be deployed simultaneously.

As the curtain falls, *GH2* will be remembered, like the original, as one of the most fun times you can have with your PS2. It avoids the sophomore jinx and manages to create some true musical magic.

RANDY NELSON

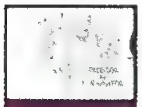


I WANNA BE A ROCKSTAR You can use cash earned by playing gigs to unlock more characters, costumes, guitars, and even new styles for your axe.

PSM SCORE
9.5
out of 10

verdict

Pure fun. That's the best way to describe *Guitar Hero II*. Its **song list is sure to please almost everyone**, and while not much has changed in the way of presentation, new additions – including the handy practice and **absolutely addictive co-op play** – make this **a worthy sequel** to the best music game ever produced.



TROGDOR!

One of the unlockable gems in *GH2*, "Trogdor," originated from the popular www.homestarrunner.com (no dash). It's about a, erm... dragon-man named Trogdor the Burninator, and you should really check out the original short at the site!

ALONE, YOU ARE STRONG.
TOGETHER, YOU ARE INVINCIBLE.

You are Rianna Saren, a skilled Twi'lek mercenary. Along with your [illegible] droid, Zeeo, batt[illegible] way through [illegible] forces and steal the plans for the Empire's most [illegible] weapon, the Death [illegible]

Play the first *Star Wars®* game developed exclusively for the Nintendo DS™ and PSP® (PlayStation®Portable) systems. Master one-of-a-kind collaborative fighting moves, including the Dual Cannon, the Hammer of Ryloth, and the Winds of Mustafar!

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STAR WARS
LETHAL ALLIANCE™

PS2: Splinter Cell: Double Agent

PSM SCORE 9.0 out of 10

ANYTHING BUT YOUR TYPICAL SPY SEQUEL

Splinter Cell: Double Agent is everything you've come to expect from the topnotch Tom Clancy action series: tense sneaking, creative enemy elimination, and, of course, lots of nifty spy gear. Instead of simply adopting the "bigger and better looking" sequel mind-set, however, the game's creators introduce a significant series-altering element: Sam Fisher, umpteenth-time savior of the world from nutty baddies, must play on the side of the bad guys. Now this doesn't make actually *playing* the game hugely different, but it does mean that being wary of how your in-game actions are perceived by both sides is *very* important. It's a tough, but enjoyable, balancing act. New tactics, a well-delivered story, and, not to be overlooked, even better online co-op and competitive play not only make this the most intriguing game yet in the series, but easily one of the best games of its kind, period. **RANDY NELSON**

HEEL TURN Sam's playing both sides, so he has to be extremely cautious.

info

PRICE: $39.99
ESRB RATING: Mature
MULTIPLAYER: 2-player online co-op; 4-player online versus
SUPPORTS: •Network Adaptor •USB Headset
PUBLISHED BY: Ubisoft
MADE BY: Ubisoft Montreal

PS2: Bully

PSM SCORE 8.5 out of 10

ROCKSTAR EARNS AN "A," NOT AN AO RATING

info

PRICE: $39.99
ESRB RATING: Teen
SUPPORTS: •Widescreen •Pro Logic II
PUBLISHED BY: Rockstar
MADE BY: Rockstar Vancouver

Despite its name, *Bully* is not really about being a bully in the traditional sense. Yes, the main character, Jimmy Hopkins, defies authority and even beats people up from time to time (among other things), but he's actually more of a bully to bullies. He doesn't do it just because he can; he does it because they probably deserve it.

There's just so much to do at Bullworth Academy (the game's setting) and the surrounding environs, whether it's going to class (classes are mini-games that reward you with new skills) or helping out random strangers or taking a date to the carnival.

The game plays like *GTA*, only instead of a gun, you have a slingshot, and instead of cars, you've got bicycles. It has some of the same annoyances *GTA* has, too – the target-lock, for example, doesn't always lock on to the targets you want. While the story is engaging enough, the characters, particularly Jimmy himself, can sometimes be just plain unlikable – which may be the point. Don't let any of this – or the controversy surrounding it – deter you, though; *Bully* is a remarkable game. **JUSTIN CHENG**

RULE THE SCHOOL Put an end to the bullying.

GUIDE TO WIRELESS

gaming

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raising the bar

Where Do You Play?

Tips for where to play, when to play, and what to play!

Games for Everyone

Psst!...you don't have to be a diehard gamer to have fun. We tell you how!

Cell Spotlight

The absolute best mobile phones for gaming

LESS TALK. MORE ACTION.

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Wardrobe courtesy: Pierre-Henri Mattout, Loris Dorian, G-Star, Canapi, Genes, JLo and LeTigre

Denni Brueggemann

The New Way to Play

The wireless gaming revolution is here! Cingular leads the charge with phones that put the *fun* in functional.

• • • Sleek. Stylish. Simple. Fully loaded.

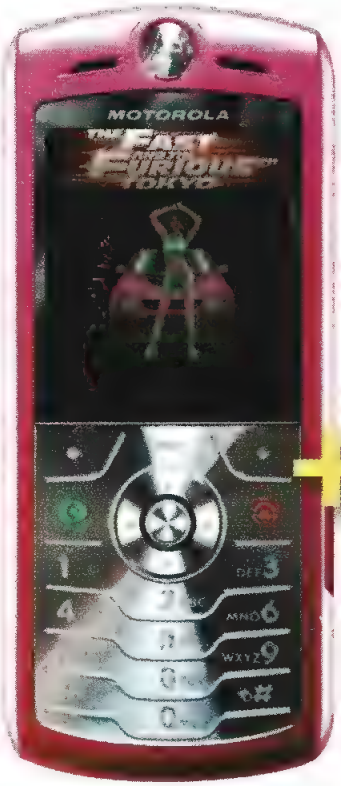
Our expectation of what a cell phone can do has changed drastically over time. They're not just for calling clients or staying in touch with family and friends anymore—today's mobiles are all-in-one devices that let us browse the internet, check sports scores, snap digital photos, listen to music, text our buddies, and show off our own unique styles. And yes, play all the latest hot games!

Welcome to the new way to play games on the go. Cingular has a sizzling lineup of gaming phones to match what interests you—your personality, your needs, and your lifestyle. So what are you waiting for? *It's time to play!*

Motorola RAZR V3 Black

●●● Boasting over a million users*, the RAZR V3 is America's most popular wireless phone and only Cingular offers it in a sleek black finish. An incredible .55 inches thin, this phone comfortably slips into any pocket yet packs the raw power needed to play today's top wireless games. Flip it open to reveal a sexy blue-lit metallic key panel and ample 2.2 inch color display—perfect for gaming, viewing MPEG4 video clips, text messaging, and much more. *Source: M: Metrics

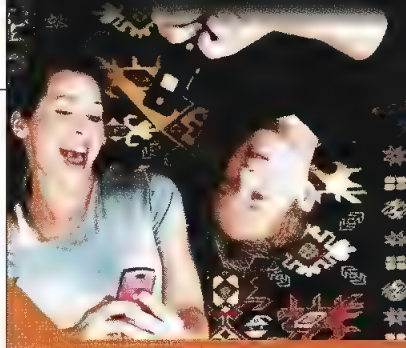
Features include
- VGA camera with 4X zoom
- Bluetooth wireless connectivity
- Quad-band world capability
- Instant Messaging using AOL Instant Messenger
- Built-in speaker phone
- Wireless Internet access
- Voice Recorder
- Built-in 3D graphics engine



Motorola SLVR L7

●●● Taking a break from gaming doesn't mean the entertainment has to end. Even thinner than the RAZR (.45 inches!), Motorola's SLVR L7 is also a fully functional iTunes-compatible digital jukebox that allows you to store up to 100 songs on its removable Micro SD card. Synchronize the SLVR with your PC's song lists and categorize your music library by artist, album, or playlist. No earphones? Rock out to tunes on the phone's built-in stereo speakers!

Features include
- VGA camera with 4x zoom, video capture, and playback
- Bluetooth wireless connectivity
- Instant Messaging using AOL, Yahoo!, and ICQ
- Multimedia messaging—send text, pictures, and sound!
- Up to 512MB of removable flash memory
- Built-in speakerphone
- Music stops for incoming calls



24.7%
The percentage of cell phone owners who play a game on their handset at least once during the month.
Source: M:Metrics, June 2006

33
The average age of video game players.
SOURCE: ESA

47%
of all cell phone gamers have three or more games installed on their handset.
Source: M:Metrics, June 2006

YOU MAY NEVER TALK AGAIN

Text GAME KEYWORD TO HNZON (46966) on your phone.

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HANDS-ON MOBILE

LG CU500

●●● Feel the power of Cingular's high-speed 3G network for yourself with LG's CU500 handset, a truly multimedia wireless phone that can download games in seconds and stream exclusive video clips, TV, and digital radio. At the gym or on the go, use its built-in customizable digital audio player and handy external controls to enjoy music anywhere with Bluetooth stereo headset support. (And we love that the Bluetooth stereo works with games, too!)

Features include

- 1.3 Megapixel swivel camera with 4x zoom and video
- Built-in image editor
- Bluetooth wireless connectivity
- MicroSD flash card port
- Instant Messaging using AOL, MSN, Yahoo!, and ICQ
- Multimedia messaging
- Full duplex speakerphone
- 3G network capable (transmission speeds up to 1.8Mbps)

FEED YOUR PUZZLE-GAME ADDICTION WITH THESE GREAT MOBILE GAMES FOR YOUR CINGULAR PHONE!

PARIS HILTON'S DIAMOND QUEST

LUMINES mobile

KEYWORD: DIAMOND

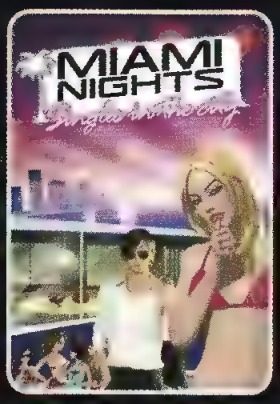
KEYWORD: LUMINES

TEXT THE GAME'S KEYWORD TO 82174 NOW TO GET ONE OF THESE GREAT GAMES!

STANDARD TEXT MESSAGING AND GAME CHARGES MAY APPLY

ALSO CHECK OUT THESE GREAT GAMES:

KEYWORD: BRAIN



KEYWORD: MNIGHTS

KEYWORD: AGENT

KEYWORD: CASINO

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cingular raising the bar

gameloft WWW.GAMELOFT.COM

Sony Ericsson W810i

●●● Style, speed, and value collide with Sony Ericsson's hip W810i Walkman mobile music player/wireless phone that has built-in 3D acceleration for cutting-edge game graphics. Better yet, travellers will appreciate its super-handy Flight Mode, which lets you play games and listen to tunes on airplanes. Connect the W810i's headset and enjoy up to 175 loaded songs or its built-in FM radio. Sturdily designed and easy to hold, it's a gamer's dream and a music fiend's delight.

Features include

- 2 Megapixel camera with autofocus and 4x zoom
- Bluetooth wireless connectivity
- Built-in FM radio
- Integrated 3D game acceleration
- Sony's exclusive Mega Bass technology (enhances bass frequencies for better sounding music)
- Included Disc2Phone music management software
- 512MB Memory Stick PRO Duo memory card

Men vs. Women

Who plays all video games (console, PC, mobile, etc.)?

62% male
38% female

SOURCE: ESA

BUT ACCORDING TO A RECENT REPORT BY TELEPHIA, WOMEN MAKE UP 55% OF THE MARKET FOR MOBILE PHONE GAMES! THE ONLY GENRE DOMINATED BY MEN IS ACTION/FIGHTING.

The big game
comes to the small screen

"Glu has painstakingly recreated the general atmosphere of the WSOP"
- IGN.com

Grab your phone, put on your shades and saddle up to the table. The most authentic poker experience available on a mobile phone is as close as your keypad. Now available on all wireless carriers.

The Real Deal. Anytime. Anywhere.

a player plays anywhere

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Say goodbye to boredom! No matter where you are, entertainment is as close as your wireless phone. Here are our tips for the ten best spots to sneak in some playtime.

Where do you play?

one) **The commute** Let's face it, staring at the guy next to you while cooped up on a train or bus isn't much fun. Instead, energize your morning with a quick game on your way to school or work. Most wireless games can be played with only one hand (for when you're hanging on for dear life) and are short enough to enjoy in just a few minutes!

2) **Hanging with friends** Did you know that many cell phone games can be played with other people? Wireless games like *World Poker Tour: Texas Hold 'Em 2* have live chat, IM buddy lists, and online tournaments. Join an online community or compete against your buddy in the same room!

3) **Waiting Rooms** Don't you hate the feeling of being stuck in a dentist's office and having read *every* magazine? A Cingular phone is your portal to mobile gaming nirvana. Another bonus: All cell phone games have the option of turning off sound effects. Game in good conscience without disturbing the people around you and relax.

four) **Lines** Long, dull lines are a fact of life. Now, waiting to make a deposit at the bank doesn't have to be a life-sapping experience! Unlike a book or magazine, your Cingular phone is always close at hand. Not only will the time pass faster, you may even wish that line was a little bit longer.

five) **Car trips** Here's a tip for parents: On long car drives, a Cingular phone can easily double as a gaming console for restless kids in the back seat. There are a wide assortment of titles for gamers of all ages, many starring popular characters from Disney and Nickelodeon. Incoming calls will interrupt the gameplay so you'll never miss an important message.

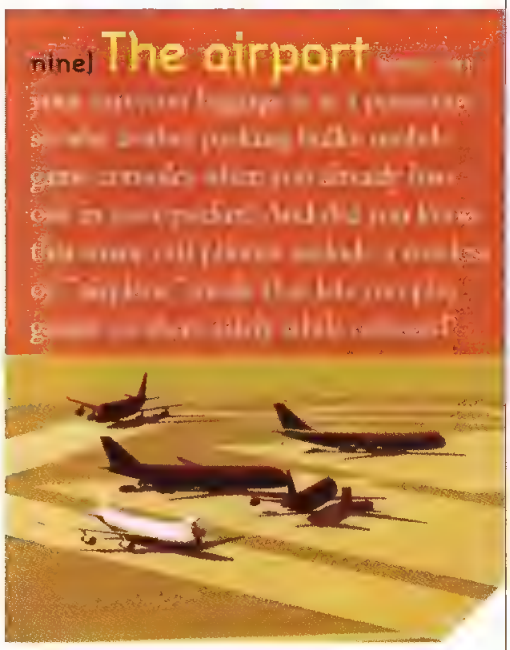
RIGHT: DAVID FARFIELD/GETTY IMAGES

six) School

It's no secret that teen-agers and college students are the world's most active cell phone users.* A full 30-percent of students say they play games on their wireless phones while at school, and though you shouldn't get your game on during class, making the most of your downtime at lunch or on a break can be beneficial when prepping for a big quiz. A puzzle game or brain teaser (like Gameloft's *Brain Challenge*) will keep your mind fresh and your body relaxed *According to M:Metrics

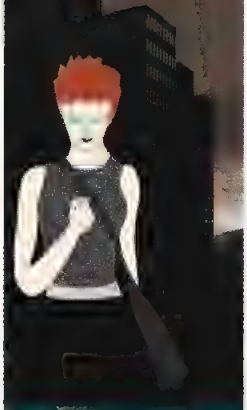
7) Doing laundry Add up the time and a trip to the laundromat can easily eat up an hour and a half or more of your day. Though games designed for your Cingular phone can be enjoyed in just a couple of minutes, many are engaging and deep enough to be played for hours on end. For extended periods, try a strategy title like *Company of Heroes* or an action epic such as *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent*. And don't worry, most games can be saved almost anywhere in case your socks dry faster than expected.

8) At the gym Make that boring treadmill routine fly by with a quick game or two. Plus, you don't need a separate digital music player to get pumped for the rest of your workout! More and more phones (such as the Sony Ericsson W810i and LG CU500) are mobile game devices and fully functional MP3 players in one sweet device that'll allow you to shoot virtual hoops one minute *and* get your groove on the next.



nine) The airport

ten) Anytime! Who needs an excuse to have fun? Games on your Cingular phone are easy to get into, simple to play, and their playtime can be as long or as short as you want. Best of all, you don't need any extra hardware—the power is already in your handset. In fact, Iplay's Vice President of Sales Stephane Labrunie has announced that he expects the sale of mobile games to surpass that of console games by the end of 2006. *So why wait?*



Faster Gaming Now!

More and more, new handsets are supporting Cingular's high-speed 3G wireless technology through its high-speed EDGE network. 3G utilizes the Universal Mobile Telecommunications System (UMTS) to support broadband transfer rates of up to 1,920 kbits per second and an average speed of 400-700 kpbs. That's over 10 times the speed of a dial-up connection!

What does that blazing speed mean to you? Imagine downloading and getting to play the newest wireless games in less time than it takes to dial a phone number. Higher download speeds mean that future cell phone games can have more features, better multiplayer functionality, and improved graphic quality. Stream video clips faster than ever before or even watch TV shows on your cell phone! The possibilities are endless.

TOP LEFT, PHOTOD SC; TOP RIGHT,ROZ WOODWARD/GETTY IMAGES; MIDDLE, DAVID FARFIELD, GETTY IMAGES; BOTTOM, JOHN FOXX/GETTY IMAGES

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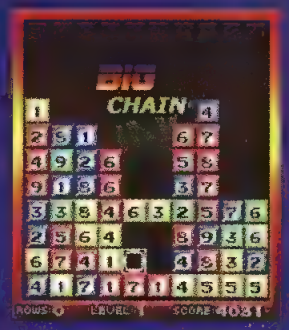
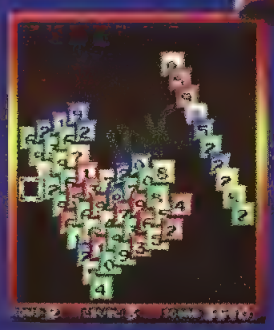
UNO Freefall™, a new game from Oasys Mobile, is a fun and challenging puzzler which will keep you glued to your phone for hours!

Cingular customers, get started playing now!

1. Go to the **MEdia Mall** on your Cingular handset
2. Select **Shop Games**
3. Choose the **Puzzle** category
4. Select **UNO® Free Fall**





Customers of other wireless carriers look for download instructions and other information at **mattelmobile.com**

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unlimited use

At OasysMobile.com you can check out our huge selection of ringtones, wallpaper and games for your phone. Everything you download from Oasys Mobile is stored online so you can redownload it when you need to. Oh yeah - and it's FREE. No subscriptions, No BS.

OASYS

Games for Everyone!

Never picked up a gamepad in your life? No problem! Games for phones are designed to appeal to any type of gamer—even if you don't consider yourself one!

What is a "gamer?"

To a lot of people, the stereotype is the pimply-faced teenager slaying virtual zombies in his parents' basement. But did you know that according to the Entertainment Software Association (ESA), women over the age of 18 make up a significantly greater portion of all gamers (30%) than boys under the age of 17 (23%)?

Yes, if you've ever played a round of bridge online or a quick game of *Tetris*, then you can proudly call yourself a gamer. The outdated cliché of gamers as social pariahs has been swept aside by some pretty compelling facts.

Did you know, for example, that 81% of cell phone gamers earn an average of $25,000 or more a year?[1] Or that 25% of people over the age of 50 play games?[2] And there's only room for growth: While the number of games being downloaded for cellular phones is skyrocketing, you may be surprised to learn that only 8.9% of owners have ever played a downloaded game.[1] Why? Some people think the games are too expensive to purchase, too difficult to play, or that they are simply not a "gamer." But nothing could be further from the truth—downloading and buying a game for your cell phone is inexpensive, quick, and easy!

continued on page 20 »

1 Source: M-Metrics; 2 Source: ESA

Illustration by Turtle Burkybile

ROCK'EM SOCK'EM ROBOTS™ IS SO GOOD IT WILL KNOCK YOUR BLOCK OFF

Based on the classic Mattel® game, Rock'em Sock'em Robots™, the mobile game, is a fast paced multiplayer wireless game with a whole arsenal of amazing,rapid-fire attack moves for your cell phone!

$2.99 MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION

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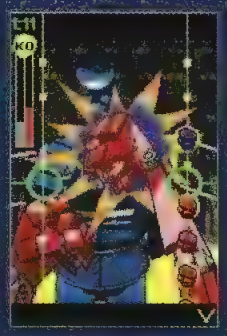
2. Select **Shop Games**
3. Choose the **Action/Adventure** category
4. Choose the **Fighting** category
4. Select **Rock'em Sock'em Robots™**

Customers of other wireless carriers look for download instructions and other information at **mattelmobile.com**



Be quick or you'll get hit.

Now knock his block off!

At OasysMobile.com you can check out our huge selection of ringtones, wallpaper and games for your phone. Everything you download from Oasys Mobile is stored online so you can redownload it when you need to. Oh yeah - and it's FREE. No subscriptions, No BS.

OASYS mobile

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GAME ON.
AND ON, AND ON, AND ON.

Download the latest games onto your Cingular phone from our massive library.

GA601

GA602

GA607

GA608

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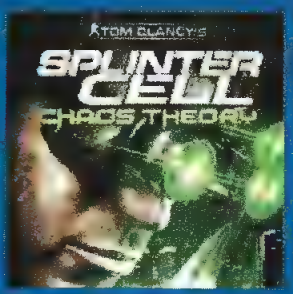
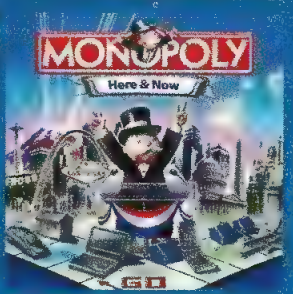
GA604



GA609



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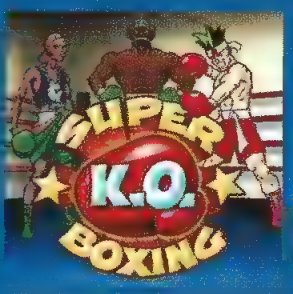


GA611

GA612

DOWNLOADING IS EASY AS 1-2-3!

1. Select New Text Message from Menu
2. Type in game Code and send it to 386
3. Purchase will be sent to your inbox

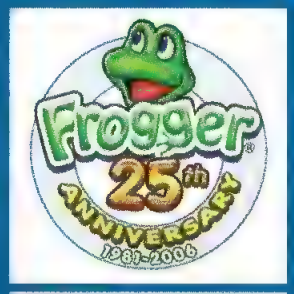
OR VISIT
CINGULAR.COM/MEDIAMALL
$4.99 – $7.99 PER GAME

GA613

GA614

GA615

GA616



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cingular
raising the bar

continued from page 16

THE CINGULAR EDGE

Some games can be rented on a monthly basis for as low as three dollars a month. Purchasing a game for unlimited use is usually just a few dollars more. And unlike the costly games you'd buy for consoles—which can range anywhere from $19.99-$59.99—many cell phone games can be downloaded and tried out before you buy for *free*.

Luckily, the truth is getting out: According to a recent report by Telephia, the number of wireless subscribers who have downloaded a mobile game has jumped by 15% since late 2005. (The most popular game? *Tetris*, of course!) It also says that nearly 13.5 million subscribers downloaded a game in the second quarter of 2006. If you're not one of those 13.5 million, there's no better time to start than right now!

Some experts even believe that wireless phones may have an edge on portable game consoles produced by heavy hitters like Nintendo and Sony in the years to come. Says Paul DeBeasi, senior analyst with the Burton Group: "The phone is becoming the new Game Boy. Basically, there's just an explosion of new applications, really on the consumer side."

FUN ANYWHERE

But forget the sales figures and statistics—the best reason to get into cell phone games is the *fun*. There's a greater selection of game titles than ever before, and even "non-gamers" will find a time-burner that can entertain or educate for minutes, hours, and even months on end. Everything you need to get started is right in your hand—no special equipment is necessary to play golf with Tiger Woods or to build your own bustling nightclub. All that's missing is you.

Can't decide what to try?

No problem—here's a quick look at wireless gaming's most popular genres and its rising stars:

puzzle

Challenge your brain with short bursts of mind-bending gameplay in wireless gaming's most popular genre. **PLUSSES:** Easy to learn and you'll keep wanting to play "just one more game." **EXAMPLES:** *Zuma, Bejeweled, Tetris Mania*

card/board/casino

Poker, Blackjack, and other card games are more popular than ever. Losing your shirt, however, is not. **PLUSSES:** Play solo or online in brief hands or full-blown tournaments. Even get play hints and coaching that will improve your card game on Saturday night with your friends. **EXAMPLES:** *World Poker Tour, World Series of Poker, Secrets of Hold'em by Phil Lederer*

retro

Relive your days as a quarter jockey with these picture-perfect translations of the games you loved from the corner arcade. **PLUSSES:** Simple gameplay, endless nostalgia. **EXAMPLES:** *PAC-MAN, Frogger, After Burner II.*

sports

Football, baseball, golf, boxing...just about any sport you can imagine has been shrunk down for your cell phone. **PLUSSES:** Big name franchises (Madden, Tiger Woods), tons of features. **EXAMPLES:** *Madden NFL 07, NBA Live 07*

strategy & RPG

For intense entertainment that requires a little more thought than most casual games, strategy games can make hours slip away like minutes. **PLUSSES:** Deep gameplay. Examples: *Company of Heroes, Civilization III, Ancient Empires II*

action/adventure

Craving a quick fix of non-stop action? Brush off your trigger finger and save the world! **PLUSSES:** Relieves stress, fast gameplay. **EXAMPLES:** *Saint's Row, Destroy All Humans, Splinter Cell*

simulations

For those of us with a touch of a god complex, shaping the destinies of others is just a keypad press away. **PLUSSES:** Build cities, manage pets and little people, and show everyone who's boss! **EXAMPLES:** *The Sims 2, Monopoly Tycoon 2007, Night Club Empire*

Breakdown of Games

currently loaded on cell phones by genre

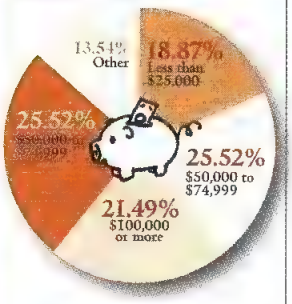
Puzzle	22%
Other (Racing, Quiz, etc.)	14
Card	12
Casino	11
Retro Arcade	9
Board game	7
Sports	7
Word or Number	7
Strategy	6
Action/Adventure	5

Source: M-Metrics, June 2006

Earning Power

per year of cell phone gamers

Source: M-Metrics, June 2006



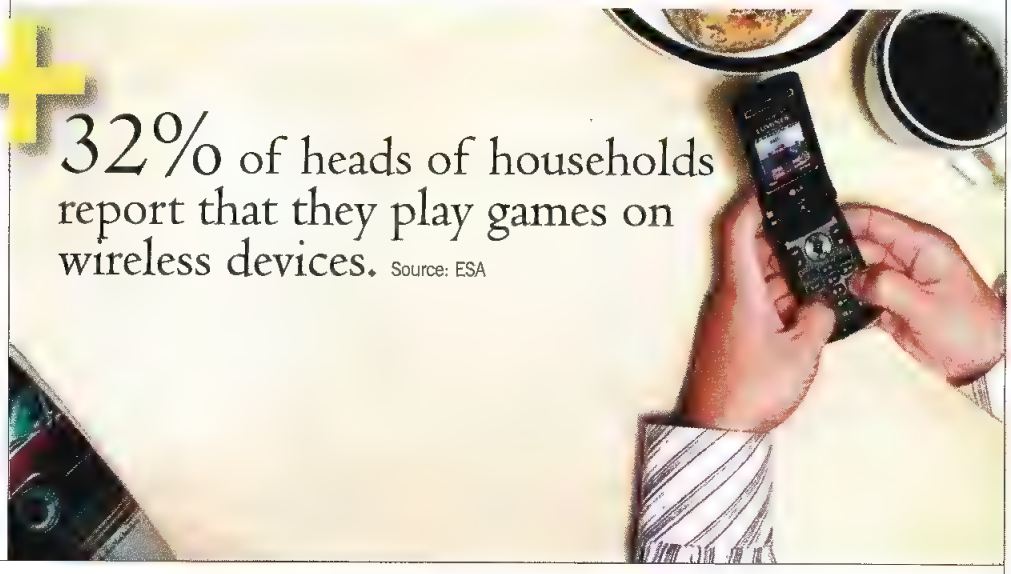
Employment Status

of cell phone gamers

Employed Full Time	50.24%
Full time student	13.06
Unemployed	11.18
Full time student, also employed	10.41
Employed Part Time	9.23
Other	4.23
Retired	1.64

Source: M-Metrics, June 2006

32% of heads of households report that they play games on wireless devices. Source: ESA



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Hit games for your mobile phone!

Get these and other great games at www.realarcade.com/mobile

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text 30PIN to 32852

SHAPE SHIFTER
text SS to 32852

PILE UP!
text PIL to 32852

FEEDING FRENZY
text FF to 32852

REALARCADE WORLD SOCCER
text RWS to 32852

CHAINZ
text CHA to 32852

CIRCUS EXTREME
text TCCE to 32852

MAGIC INLAY
text MI to 32852

REALARCADE WINTER GAMES
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Looking to play on the go? Cingular has a game that's right for you

What to play now in Mobile Gaming

The hottest in wireless gaming is as close as your mobile phone when you raise the bar with Cingular's exemplary service. We've got the lowdown on the games you've gotta play right now—from action to trivia and everything in-between. The latest in sports? Check! Caring for virtual pets? You're covered! The most mind-bending puzzle games? You bet! The action is only a quick, inexpensive download away.

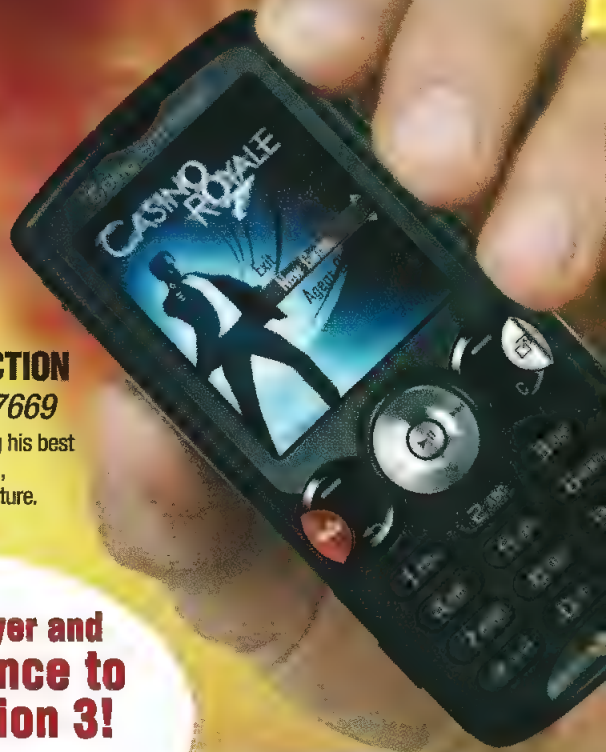
Discover why Cingular is the world leader in wireless gaming excitement. It's not just a mobile phone—*it's an arcade in the palm of your hands!*

Always Be A Player.

TAKE THE WHEEL FOR A SPIN

Text WHEEL to 47669

America's favorite game show is back in 2007 with fabulous new features, including puzzle of the day.



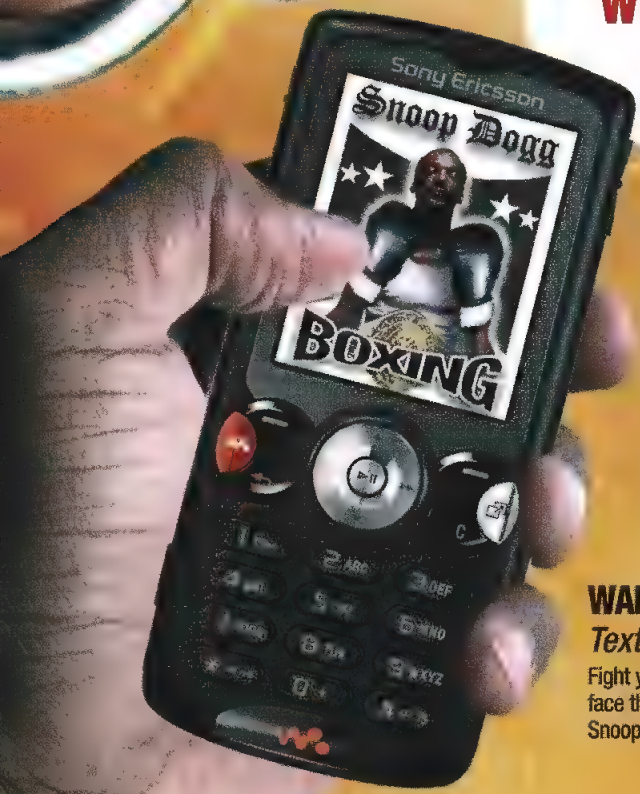
GET INTO THE ACTION

Text CASINO to 47669

Become James Bond, using his best moves and favorite gadgets, in this action-packed adventure.

Be the Biggest Player and
Enter for a Chance to Win a Playstation 3!

If you text CASINO, SNOOP, CLANK or WHEEL, you will be entered to win a Playstation 3 console.*



GIVE YOUR PHONE A LITTLE CHARACTER

Text CLANK to 47669

Help Ratchet & Clank swing, shoot and grind their way from level to level with an arsenal full of fun.

WALK THE DOG

Text SNOOP to 47669

Fight your way up the ranks to face the king of the hip hop ring, Snoop Dogg.

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Madden NFL '07

EA Sports

Take the thrill of real NFL football with you anywhere! EA's best-selling Madden series has hit Cingular phones with all the action you've come to expect—play 11-on-11 as your favorite NFL teams and players, selecting from over 50 plays from the real Madden playbook. Throw precision passes and feel the excitement of hard-hitting tackles narrated by Al Michaels and the man himself, John Madden.

GENRE: **SPORTS**

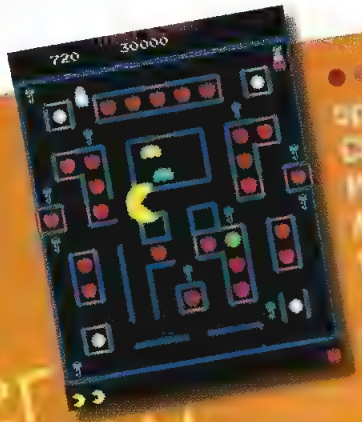
Lumines Mobile

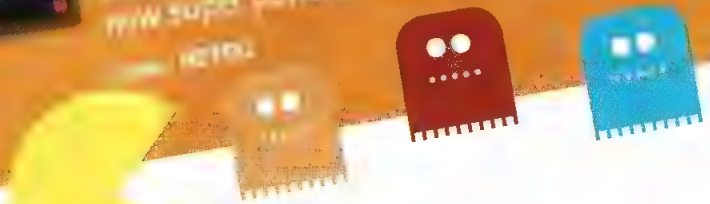
Gameloft

The puzzle sensation that rocked the Sony PSP is even more mobile. This next generation of *Tetris*-style games is going to keep you dancing to the beat of entrancing electronica tracks as it challenges your brain (and fingers). Simple to play, yet full of surprising depth, *Lumines Mobile* will definitely keep you in suspense for hours at a time.

GENRE: **PUZZLE**

Super PAC-MAN





Company of Heroes

THQ

The phenomenal real-time strategy experience on the PC (Rating: 96%, *PC Gamer*) has come to your mobile phone. Manage the brave fighting men in Able Company as you attack and outsmart your enemies across Europe during World War II in a spectacular single-player campaign that will lead you to victory over the Axis powers. Custom unit selection and randomized objectives guarantees that this game will be replayed over and over.

GENRE: **STRATEGY**

World Poker Tour: Texas Hold 'Em 2

Hands-On

If you're serious about poker, then *World Poker Tour: Texas Hold 'Em 2* is a must-have. Rethink what you'd expect from a mobile game—this baby is packed with features, like 6-person tables, smoothly panning camera movement, leaderboards, professional playing tips, customizable avatars, and a snazzy interface. For even more fun, head online: You'll find regular live tournaments, private multiplayer tables, live chat, and IM-style buddy lists. And remember, what happens on your Cingular phone, stays on your Cingular phone.

GENRE: **CARD/BOARD/CASINO**

DEAL

Pat Sajak's Blackjack BOWLING

Cingular customers text "PSBB" to 386 (FUN)

SLICE

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES™ FIRST FORWARD

Cingular customers text "TURTLES" to 386 (FUN)

SOLVE

USA TODAY. SUDOKU

Cingular customers text "USASUDOKU" to 386 (FUN)

Hit, Roll or Hold? Challenge yourself with the fast-paced action of blackjack and the excitement of bowling. This game will keep you rolling - from the card table to the bowling lane, all on your mobile.

Ninja Training NYC: Get your Turtle on with this futuristic high-octane two-in-one action game. Test your combat limits as your favorite Turtle - or use super moves to descend an aerial traffic jam.

USA TODAY Sudoku 2nd Edition: A quantum leap from the newspaper to your phone. Enjoy the latest version of this popular number puzzle. Packed with hot new features!

Get more info at www.gocomics.com/mobilegames.
Download the latest animations, wallpapers and more games at mobile.gocomics.com.

cingular raising the bar

gocomics™ toon in daily

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Productions. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles © 2006 USA TODAY

Freestyle Moto-X II

I-play

Scorch through gritty urban locations as you pull off the sickest stunts and catch the biggest air in *FMX II*. Race and jump your bikes through multiple environments and terrains ranging from snowscapes to desert dunes, pulling off tricks to progress to the next level. Between races, you can tune up your bike in the garage as you prepare to beat your rivals for the extreme-racing bike crown.

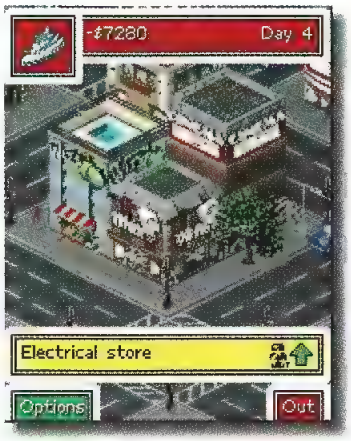
GENRE: **SPORTS**

Family Guy: Air Griffin

Airborne

This game is freakin' sweet! Catapult Family Guy's portly patriarch Peter Griffin into the stratosphere and see how far you can make him go as he attempts to smash the record for the world's longest unaided human flight. Set the angle, choose your power setting, and fling Peter high above Spooner Street's many crazy obstacles. As Peter himself might say, "Take that, gravity—you screwy, space-time bending floozy!"

GENRE: **RETRO**



Monopoly Tycoon 2007

Hands-On

Think you know *Monopoly Tycoon*? This city-building takeoff on the classic *Monopoly* board game has undergone a complete overhaul for 2007 that includes better-looking visuals and seven unique scenarios. Look for the addition of Community Chest and Chance cards to make managing your city feel even more like playing a game of *Monopoly*. Want to see what the community thinks about how you've been running your businesses? Take a poll...but it's gonna cost you!

GENRE: **STRATEGY & RPG**

Deer Hunter 2

Glu

●●● Experience the thrill of the hunt with *Deer Hunter 2*, the sequel to the best selling mobile hunting game ever. Take aim at even more deer species with more weapons in all-new beautifully detailed environments. Utilize the GPS system to track deer & choose your hunting location. Lure in big bucks with scents and calls, then use the Steady Aim System for pinpoint accuracy. Hit the kill zone for one shot take-downs and instant replays of the action.

GENRE: SPORTS

Space Invaders – the original video game masterpiece and 5 other greats, including *Bust-A-Move* and *Megatouch*, finally available on your mobile phone.

BUST-A-MOVE

ARKANOID

SPACE INVADERS

MEGATOUCH 1

MEGATOUCH 2

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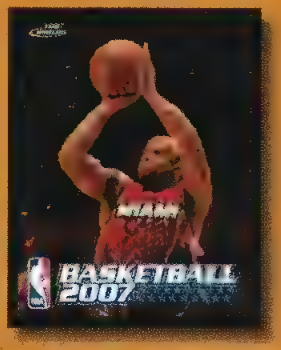
NBA Live '07

EA Sports

●●● Take the point and deliver fast break passes on the fly as teammates run the lanes awaiting your pass. On defense, get inside and feel what it's like to block a dunk—or to be dunked on—as big bodies collide under the basket. Will you live in the paint or set up camp outside the arc? The choice is yours when you control real NBA players in 5-on-5 play with a full season of dribbling, passing, rebounding, blocking, knockdowns, shooting, and dunking.

—MORIS

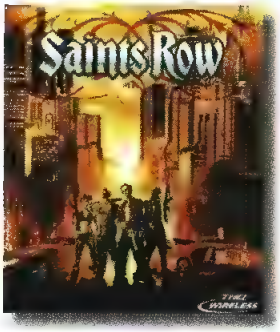


Night Club Empire

Digital Chocolate

Got what it takes to run the hottest clubs in town? Get the party started in *Night Club Empire* as the manager of three different customizable clubs. Hire staff, select DJs, pimp out the dance floor with high-end lighting, and throw the ultimate bash as you complete missions to unlock even more bling for your club. Impress your pals by posting high scores online and then challenge them to out-do you.

GENRE: **STRATEGY & RPG**



Saints Row

THQ

Who needs an Xbox when a Cingular phone is at your fingertips? Rule the city in *Saints Row* by battling rival gangs and earning respect, one district at a time. Roam the slums, projects, warehouse, and downtown areas as your carry out tense missions of action-packed shooting mayhem. Use your points to acquire more firepower and bling, but be careful—as your power grows, so does the target on your back.

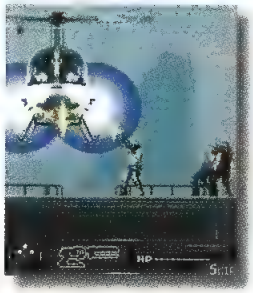
GENRE: **ACTION/ADVENTURE**

Rock'em Sock'em Robots

Oasys

The classic Mattel game goes Cingular! Take control of your robot fighter and challenge friends to true head-to-head multiplayer rock'em sock'em action. Between matches, train in five different mini-games to boost your energy. Just like the plastic original, this fighter features simple controls that can deliver powerhouse punches and rapid-fire attacks. Just remember: It's all fun until your opponent gets his block knocked off. . .then it's really fun.

GENRE: **RETRO**



Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent

Gameloft

Super-spy Sam Fisher faces his most harrowing mission yet: infiltrate a terrorist organization and destroy it from within. But first you'll have to earn its trust, weighing the consequences of your actions. Kill too many criminals and you'll blow your cover, but hesitate and millions will die. For the first time, experience the tension and dilemmas of life as a Double Agent in this relentless action game.

GENRE: **ACTION/ADVENTURE**

Do you have what it takes to beat the DRIFT king? Text 'TOKYO' to '386' to BUY NOW!

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: TOKYO MOBILE GAME

ign.com BEST OF E3 2006 WINNER

The most successful mobile game racing franchise hits the streets of Japan! Master the art of drifting and beat your rivals based on pace and skill. Progress on the streets of Tokyo by gaining respect, mod your ride and prepare for the race of you life!

Available for both 2D and 3D phones.

I-play™ Mobile gaming

iplay.com

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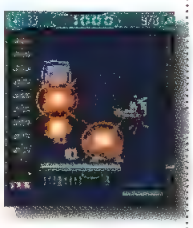
Ratchet & Clank: Going Mobile

Sony Pictures



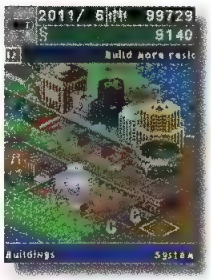
Your favorite heroes are back, but they're trapped inside your cell phone. Help Ratchet & Clank swing, shoot, and grind as they journey through ten levels, fighting their way out with seven different upgradeable wild weapons like the Boarzooka and RYNO. Perform wall jumps to investigate hidden areas and use your handy Propeller Pack to get into hard-to-reach spots. Play through the storyline to unlock 12 unique Arena challenges for even more fun!

GENRE: **ACTION/ADVENTURE**

SimCity

EA Mobile

The ultimate god sim jumps from the PC to your mobile phone as you tackle the roles of Mayor and City Planner to design and build the city of your dreams. Create a stable infrastructure and solve tons of big-city problems (like crime, pollution, fires, tornados, and even rampaging monsters) while attracting as many Sims as possible to your thriving metropolis and keeping a balanced budget.



GENRE: **STRATEGY & RPG**

Brain Challenge

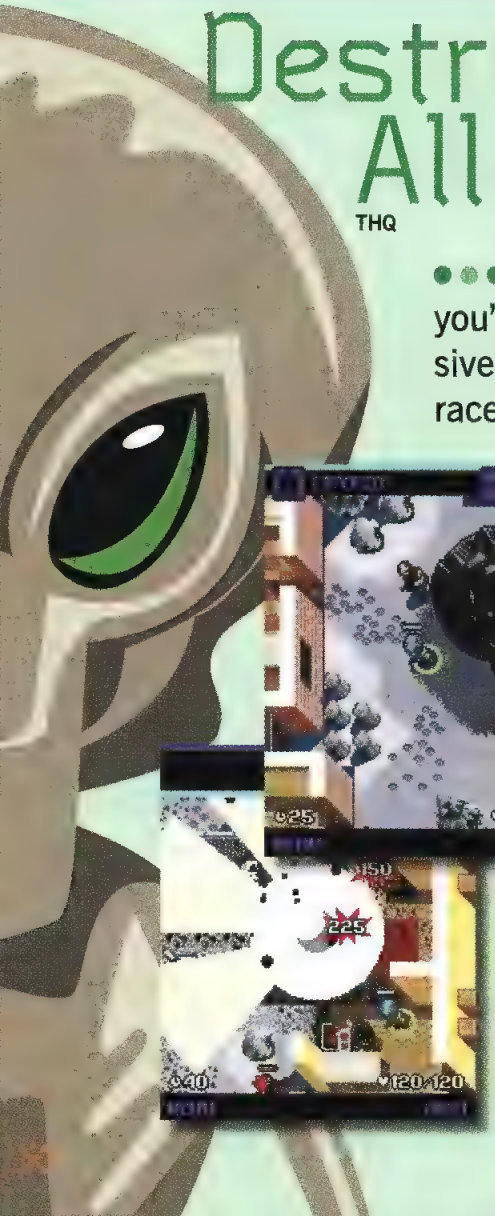
Gameloft

Just like your body, your brain needs to exercise to stay in shape. The good news: Maintaining your gray matter simply involves completing little exercises without pain, stress, or boredom. *Brain Challenge* gets the job done with a training program consisting of 12 fun mini-games that train your brain in the categories of Memory, Visual, Logic, and Math. Its simple scoring system lets you monitor how smart you're getting each day Get smarter and play games? Sign us up!

GENRE: **PUZZLE**

Destroy All Humans

THQ



●●● Forget the friendly ETs—you're an alien unleashing massive destruction on the human race. This sequel to the fan fave is coming to your Cingular phone with an upgraded arsenal of weapons, more missions, and an all-new team gameplay feature. Expect more of the irreverent humor and action that made the first game a smash, plus all the disintegration blasts you can handle.

GENRE: **ACTION/FIGHTING**

The Fast & the Furious: Tokyo 3D

I-Play

Mobile racing hits the streets of Japan and explodes onto the Tokyo drift racing scene with intense 3D graphics that bring this death-defying sport to life! Take on the role of the new kid on the block in a city where the rules of the road are both dangerous and enticing. The only way to get ahead on these mean streets is to gain respect, mod your ride, and prepare for the race of your life against the infamous Drift King!

GENRE: **SPORTS**

Win a PAC-MAN Arcade Machine!

Text the game's Keyword to 386 to download and enter!

Download any **Namco** game on your **Cingular** phone for a chance to win a **PAC-MAN** arcade machine or some cool prizes from **clubNAMCO.com**! Check out what's available on your **Cingular** phone at **www.namcogames.com**

Standard text messaging rates apply.

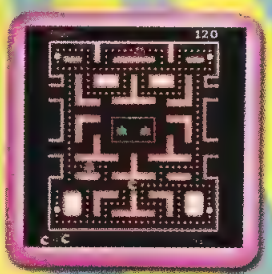
Enter before 12/15.

PAC-MAN

Keyword: Namco1

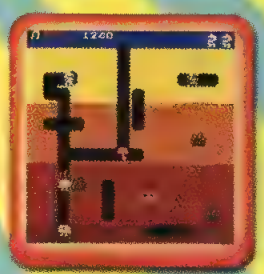
SUPER PAC-MAN

Keyword: Namco2



MS. PAC-MAN

Keyword: Namco3



DIG DUG

Keyword: Namco4

Galaga

Keyword: Namco5

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THE MOBILE ARCADE HAS ARRIVED

cingular

raising the bar

World Series of Poker

GLU

For 35 years the World Series of Poker has defined the Big Time—this is where reputations are made and legends are born. Go head-to-head with *World Series of Poker* champions, improve your game with advice from Chris "Jesus" Ferguson, and compete in multiplayer tournaments against mobile gamers around the world. The Real Deal is here and the richest prize in poker history is yours for the taking.

GENRE: CARD/BOARD/CASINO

Tetris

EA Mobile

This mind-bender may have been dreamed up before the fall of communism in Soviet-era Russia, but its blocky goodness is still going strong—in fact, it's the #1 selling game for mobile phones! You know the drill: Arrange the colorful blocks to clear as many lines as possible. EA Mobile's updated edition takes the classic gameplay and adds extra features like randomly generated backgrounds, 15 different speed levels, and two quick-play games designed for short bursts of playtime.

GENRE: **PUZZLE**

Super K.O. Boxing

GLU

Relive the glory days of arcade boxing as you go from underdog to champ on your Cingular phone with *Super K.O. Boxing*! Punch your way through three circuits against a cast of hilarious contenders like Major Pain, 15 Cent, and Sake Bomb. Learn each fighter's weakness and fighting style. Dodge and block punches to avoid going down for the count. Land punches to fill the Super K.O. meter and unleash devastating knockout blows for ultimate victory!

GENRE: **SPORTS**

My Dog

I-play

Who doesn't love caring for an adorable puppy? Now you can take that lovable pooch with you anywhere! Feed him, play with him, pet him, walk him, and even show him off in regular pet shows. Your puppy will develop his very own personality depending on how you raise him. He'll even communicate with you through cute thought bubbles and actions, letting you know when he's happy, sad, or hungry. Just don't forget to take him out once in a while or you might find a nasty surprise waiting for you....

GENRE: **STRATEGY & RPG**

Wheel of Fortune '07

Sony Pictures

Spin the wheel and win with this handheld edition of America's #1 TV game show. Call letters, buy vowels, and solve hidden phrases just like you're hanging with Pat and Vanna. Sharpen your skills by downloading new puzzles each month! *Wheel of Fortune* for your Cingular phone looks and sounds so much like the real deal, it's like you're a contestant on the hottest show on TV anytime and anywhere.

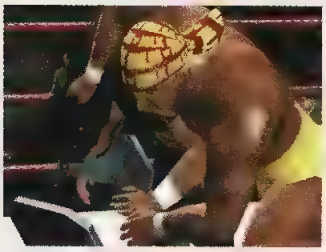
GENRE: **PUZZLE**

PS2: WWE SmackDown vs. RAW 2007

PSM SCORE 8.5 out of 10

STILL PS2'S WRESTLING CHAMP

Pretty much every returning mode in *WWE SmackDown vs. RAW 2007* has undergone significant changes, but none more so than the gameplay itself. As we've mentioned before, all grapples are performed with the right analog stick. For series veterans, this change might seem a bit odd, but it actually works really well. The developers wanted to give you even more control, and with this control scheme, they've mostly succeeded.



TAKE A SEAT (to the face)!

It's just too bad that some of the problems from the previous game weren't rectified this year. Collision detection, clipping, and (the lack of) selling are all recurring issues. Loading, too, is problematic; it's not as bad as last year's PSP game (thank goodness), but the game does have a whole lot of those pesky loading screens.

Even with these kinks, this is still undoubtedly the best *WWE SmackDown* game yet, and is well worth playing, even if you played the hell out of last year's game.

JUSTIN CHENG

THUMBS UP for great models.

info

PRICE	$49.99
ESRB RATING	Teen
MULTIPLAYER	6-player versus offline; 4-player versus online
SUPPORTS	•Multitap •Network Adaptor
PUBLISHED BY	THQ
MADE BY	Yuke's

PS2: Destroy All Humans! 2

PSM SCORE 8.0 out of 10

MORE SPACE FOR YOUR INVASION

info

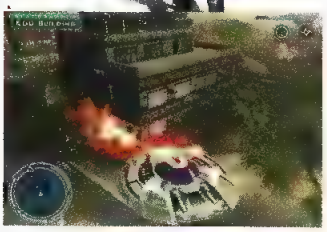
PRICE	$39.99
ESRB RATING	Teen
MULTIPLAYER	2-player co-op
SUPPORTS	•Progressive Scan •Widescreen •Pro Logic II
PUBLISHED BY	THQ
MADE BY	Pandemic Studios

Destroy All Humans! 2 expands upon the original, giving you even more freedom as an alien invader. Naturally, you can choose to avoid any side quests and just go straight for the core missions – thereby eliminating much of the openness of the game and shortening the game's length considerably – but where's the fun in that? Go out, explore, and capture humans and toss them in the Gene Blender to upgrade your mental skills while you're at it.

One issue we had, however, was with the voice acting – Crypto in particular (and he's the main character, no less). His faux Jack Nicholson voice is more irritating than humorous. Yes, we realize he sounded like this in the first game, but that doesn't make him any less annoying (more so, actually). Voice acting aside, the game does suffer from some draw distance issues – as open world games such as this one usually do – and it's especially bad when flying around the levels in your saucer.

Still, it's fun to explore these stereotypical versions of real-world cities and use your upgradable alien arsenal and psychic abilities on the unsuspecting populace.

JUSTIN CHENG



DISC JOCKEY Flying a saucer can be a blast.

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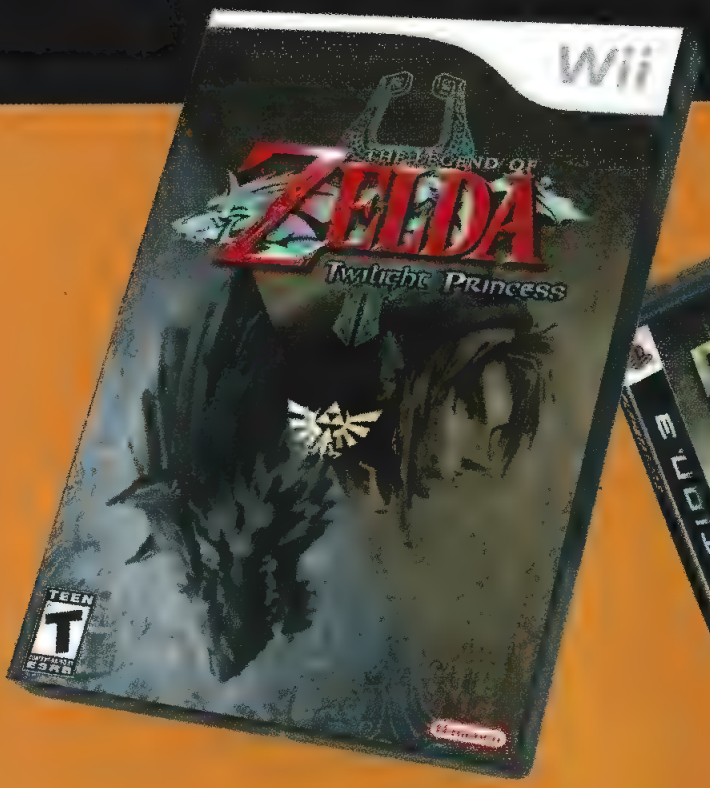

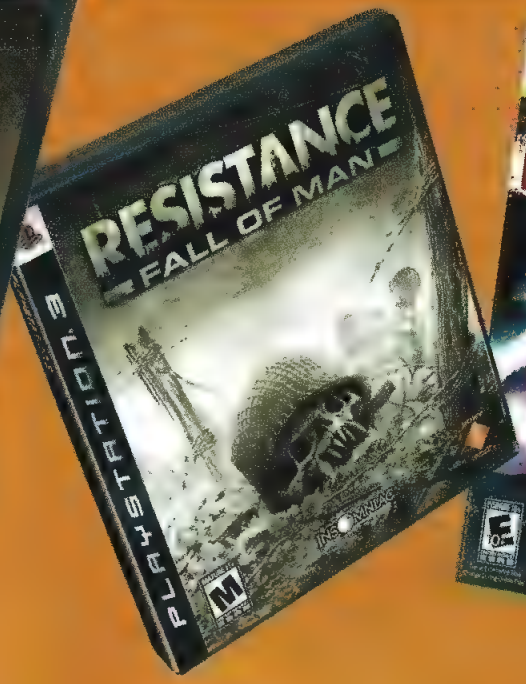

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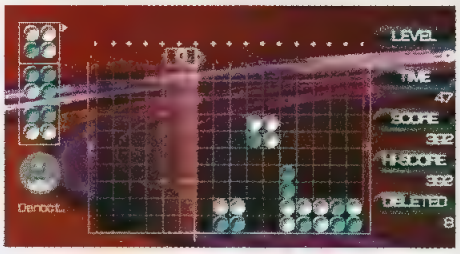
PSP: Lumines II

PSP'S BEST PUZZLER GETS BIGGER AND MORE BEAUTIFUL

PSM SCORE 8.5 out of 10

The original *Lumines* took the PSP by storm with its unique mixture of addictive puzzles and rockin' techno music. This latest installment does pretty much everything the original did, but expands on a few things. The basic gameplay remains exactly the same – you try to match up blocks as they fall to create "same-color" chunks that disappear when the screen is swept by a glowing line.

Lumines II backs a musical dump truck, packed with both newly-licensed and totally new songs from more genres, up to your PSP and unloads them into your ears while mesmerizing you with fully animated backgrounds. While the new music videos could be entrancing, you might not really even notice them because you'll be too busy arranging the blocks as they fall. Yes, the core game of *Lumines II* is so addictive that you can barely focus on all the cool animation in the background, but that's hardly a bad thing. Neither is the fact that it packs double the content of the original. GABE GRAZIANI



BLOCK-HEAD The gameplay will infect your brain, and you won't stop until everything's unlocked.

info

PRICE	$29.99
ESRB RATING	Everyone
MULTIPLAYER	2-player versus
PUBLISHED BY	Buena Vista Games
MADE BY	Q Entertainment

PS2: NFL Street 3

PARKING LOT PIGSKIN: STILL A BLAST

PSM SCORE 8.0 out of 10

If you're a football fan, *Madden* can be quite intimidating. Not only are there 22 people on the field doing God-knows-what, but it seems like everyone you play has an edge on you. With the outstanding *NFL Street* series, however, casual pigskin fans have a chance to compete without having to study any playbooks.

The third in the series has plenty of upgrades, but none are more evolved than the new Gamebreaker system. Instead of the Gamebreaker being the death knell for the opposition, now there's a slight chance you can survive it. Busting through the Respect the Street mode is fun and challenging, but why must your opponents look like chain gang workers? It's definitely a step back (albeit a small one) for the series from a purely artistic standpoint.

Lastly, why isn't this thing going next-gen? It's been in development for two years! We can't help but dream about how great a behind the back pass would look on PS3. Still, we're just happy it's out on any platform, frankly. ARTHUR EDLUND

DEFY GRAVITY and most of the laws of physics.

info

PRICE	$29.99
ESRB RATING	Everyone
MULTIPLAYER	2-player offline and online
SUPPORTS	•Network Adapter •USB Headset •Pro Logic II
PUBLISHED BY	EA Sports BIG
MADE BY	Electronic Arts Tiburon

PS2: Mortal Kombat: Armageddon

A BIG, BLOODY END TO *MK* AS WE KNOW IT

PSM SCORE
8.0
out of 10

info

PRICE
$39.99
ESRB RATING
Mature
MULTIPLAYER
2-player offline and online
SUPPORTS
•Network Adapter •Pro Logic II
PUBLISHED BY
Midway Games
MADE BY
Midway Games

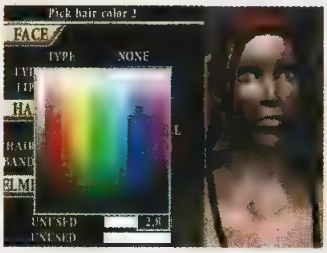
If you're a *Mortal Kombat* fan, this is the mother lode: a torrent of available characters (58 to start) fight and die for your pleasure; the *Shaolin Monks*-style Konquest mode is the best yet; and the *Motor Kombat* kart racer mini-game is silly fun. Paring down from three styles to two makes each fighter more satisfying to master and aerial combos make a delightfully gory comeback as well.

Armageddon's failure is that it doesn't improve the actual "kombat"; it's still about stringing together combos, not actual any sort of actual fighting simulation. The real shining light of *Armageddon* is the Kreate a Fighter mode, which allows you to bring almost any product of your imagination into the destructible, multi-tiered rings.

The Krypt has fewer unlockables than the previous games. *Motor Kombat*, for all its big-headed charm and levels full of gruesome ways to die in a kart racer, doesn't match the extras we've come to expect. For all the content and fun, deeper combat would have been more welcome than bloodthirsty kart racing or being able to play Meat (or God help us, Mokap). Otherwise, this is still a great collection, if not an innovative one. PATRICK JOYNT

AIR GOREDAN Plenty of the fighting's airborne, classic-like.

UM, SOME HELP HERE? This wouldn't be *MK* without stage traps.



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PS2: Capcom Classics Collection Vol. 2

REMINDING US ONCE AGAIN WHY ARCADES USED TO RULE

PSM SCORE 8.0 out of 10

info

PRICE	$19.99
ESRB RATING	Everyone
MULTIPLAYER	2-player ad hoc versus, co-op
SUPPORTS	•Progressive Scan
PUBLISHED BY	Capcom
MADE BY	Digital Eclipse

Coming nearly a year after the first installment, volume two of *Capcom Classics Collection* reminds us just how prolific the company was during the second great era of arcades that was the late eighties through the early nineties.

Super Street Fighter II Turbo is the star attraction on this disc, and it's accompanied by an amazing series of crazy in-depth "training videos" by the game's producer, David Sirlin, himself a master *SF* player. These alone are worth the price of admission. However, they're joined by 19 other classics, from shooters (*1941*) to actioners (*Strider*) to beat-'em-ups (*Knights of the Round*). There's even an updated version of *Quiz and Dragons* with contemporary Capcom trivia.

TATSUMAKISENPUKIYAKU! *Super Turbo* is still played competitively at the tournament level, so practice up!

Factor in the ability to save in any game at any time and you have yourself another value-packed retro set that's equal parts entertainment and history lesson. **RANDY NELSON**

PS2: Sega Genesis Collection

A LOVING LOOK BACK AT THE 16-BIT HIT

RISE FROM YOUR GRAVE! *Altered Beast* has a certain nostalgia, but doesn't hold up to the other games.

PSM SCORE 8.0 out of 10

info

PRICE	$19.99
ESRB RATING	Everyone
MULTIPLAYER	2-player co-op
SUPPORTS	•Progressive Scan
PUBLISHED BY	Sega
MADE BY	Digital Eclipse

Most people know that Sega used to make its own consoles, but fewer remember that there was a point at which one of them was giving Nintendo a literal run for its money. The Sega Genesis was the company's one major hardware success, and it came as the result of some very popular (and, mostly, very good) first-party games – many of which comprise this long-awaited tribute to the system.

Playing the system's launch pack-in, *Altered Beast*, you wonder how such a shallow, short game could have set the gaming world ablaze... but it did. Fortunately, this disc runs the gamut of Genesis must-haves, from *Sonic the Hedgehog 1-3*, *Golden Axe*, and *Phantasy Star II*, to later original creations such as *Comix Zone* and *Vectorman*. With 30+ games, there's really something for everyone, including nostalgists who will appreciate included interviews with Sega designers who worked on many of the games. Plus, at only 20 bucks, it's a steal. **RANDY NELSON**

PS2 + PSP:

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07

MAKING THE GREATEST GREATER

PSM SCORE 8.5 out of 10

PS2 Like the real Tiger Woods, EA's latest golfer is, year in and year out, the best in its field, but now the focus is on playing out the string and readying for next-gen.

The game feels slick enough, and good enough, and solid enough, but there's just very little in the way of real innovation.

One gripe is that the way the ball spin works really needs to change. We've got two analog sticks, so let us use them. The spin rating is predetermined, so let us just calmly ease an analog stick in the direction we want spin. Banging away at buttons to achieve more spin is silly.

The endless list of game modes is most impressive. There's a new Team Tour challenge, which is a great mash-up that has you assemble a foursome to take on Tiger's team. Plus there are so many other modes, they don't all fit on one menu.

It all adds up to be the finest *Tiger* yet, but the lack of innovation means we'll hold on to our copy of *Hot Shots Golf*. **ARTHUR EDLUND**

PlayStation 2

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR

PRICE	$39.99
ESRB RATING	Everyone
MULTIPLAYER	4-player offline, online tournaments
SUPPORTS	•Network Adaptor •USB Headset •Pro Logic II
PUBLISHED BY	EA Sports
MADE BY	Electronic Arts

info

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR

PRICE	$39.99
ESRB RATING	Everyone
MULTIPLAYER	2-player ad hoc and online
PUBLISHED BY	EA Sports
MADE BY	Electronic Arts Canada (Team Fusion)

PSM SCORE 8.5 out of 10

PSP If you're a longtime *Tiger* fan, it's disappointing that you won't find the Tiger Challenge or the Team Tour (found on the consoles), but to make up for it, there's the engaging PGA Season mode, which will gobble up plenty of your time. You'll create a golfer using the impressive Game Face mechanic, then you'll be start your hunt for the FedEx Cup following the PGA's new time line format. You won't just jump from one PGA event to another, though. Instead, you'll confront random challenges mixed in with the big events. Nothing's a must-play, which is a relief if you just can't stand the Shooting Gallery mini-game.

The game does have some problems. It plays great, but the PSP nub will lead to some spastic inaccuracy. Another problem is that shots don't do what you want sometimes. You'll power a 174 yard shot at 80%, but instead of going 140 yards, it'll go around 100. Still, online is fantastic, and you'll get a serious charge when the raucous crowd applauds your tee shot. **ARTHUR EDLUND**

NEXT-GEN LOOKS

Next-Gen *Cinemotion* graphics and presentation are hot enough to melt ice. No game brings you inside the hard-hitting, lightning fast world of pro hockey like NHL 2K7.

#1 RATED NHL GAME

EVERYONE 10+ E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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*According to GameRankings.com average scores of 2003 - 2006 hockey video games.

PSP: Ace Combat X: Skies of Deception

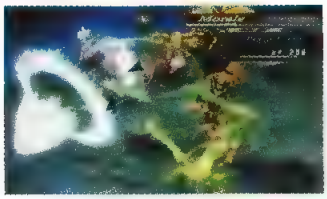
PSM SCORE 7.0 out of 10

DEFINITELY WON'T HAVE YOU EJECTING (THE DISC) ANYTIME SOON

When it comes to piloting sky-shattering, winged death machines, the *Ace Combat* series is pretty much untouchable. Each game in the franchise, *Skies of Deception* included, focuses more on fast action than nailing the true performance of the licensed jets. Thus, you won't be able to take the A-10 tank killer on a successful air reconnaissance, but overall, the games, much like this game, meld together to create an overly familiar haze. The addition of local multiplayer and tunable aircraft is a good, but belated way to fix the nubby analog stick's control and inability to give orders to your teammates – two problems the console versions lack. *Ace X* gets bonus points, however, for being a completely new title, with no "new for PSP" content shoveled over from an older PS2 game. **BRETT ELSTON**

FLY-BY-WIRE You don't need to be a sim junkie to enjoy this series.

VIEW TO A KILL The scenery detail and draw distance is impressive for a handheld game.

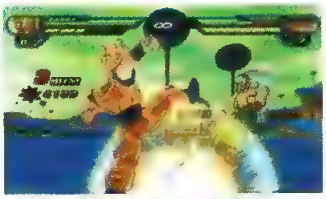


PS2: .hack//G.U. vol.1//REBIRTH

PSM SCORE 7.0 out of 10

LIKE PLAYING AN ONLINE RPG, ONLY WITHOUT TEH LAMERZ

If the original *.hack* games did one thing really well, it was simulating a MMORPG within a role-playing game. What it did wrong – repetitious and somewhat average gameplay, and a butt-fugly name – it does here again, but with some welcome improvements. Better graphics, deeper root-towns, and faster combat all add up to a sweeter game. The story is almost a total duplicate: as Haseo, you must figure out why a "real life player" falls into a coma after his character is killed in the game. While definitely not ground-breaking, fans of anime and the *.hack* series will most certainly enjoy this. **CASEY LYNCH**



PS2: Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 2

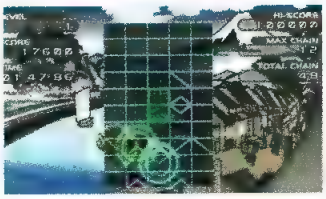
PSM SCORE 7.0 out of 10

MORE LOVE FOR FANS THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A KAMEHAMEHA AT

Tenkaichi 2 covers up lackluster gameplay with extraordinary fan service. The actual combat is just as fast, explosive, and powerful as the shows, especially with a huge selection of *DBZ* characters and stories for fans to enjoy, and new comers to experience. It's not a great fighter, but it's fun. Love or hate *Dragon Ball*, the load times in *Tenkaichi 2* will have you seeing red fast. The expanded arena selections are huge and beautifully destructible, but half a minute of loading is crazy talk. The story mode maps let you explore areas, but they're vast empty areas with few points of interest. **PATRICK JOYNT**

WONDER... SWAN?

What the heck is a "Wonderswan?" It's actually the name of a portable game system released in Japan by Bandai in 1999. The system was largely designed by the late Gunpei Yokoi, the creator of the Game Boy. The title *Gunpey* was given to the first game released for the Wonderswan in tribute to Yokoi.



PSP: Gunpey

PSM SCORE 6.0 out of 10

PROOF THAT NOT EVERY Q PRODUCTION IS AN "A"

Q Entertainment has done a great job updating the Wonderswan classic, *Gunpey*. A catchy title about taking rising rays and forming them into screen-crossing lines, it fails to match their PSP launch title in addictive pleasure. Unlike *Lumines*, failure can feel very arbitrary here. Since you can't move the segments sideways, only up or down, losing because nothing you needed popped up gives a helpless feeling. Earning additional skins is hard going even after you master the basics. There's no problem with a Q puzzler that's tougher than previous titles; it just shouldn't be so cheap. **PATRICK JOYNT**

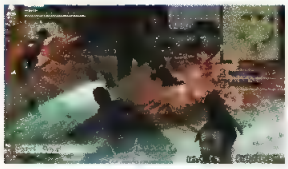
PSP: Medal of Honor Heroes

PSM SCORE **7.0** out of 10

THE EPITOME OF "SHORT, BUT SWEET"

Yes, we all know that the PSP isn't really designed for [illegible] shooters, but EA did a fairly good job of bringing the FPS experience to the handheld with *Medal of Honor Heroes* – aided in no small part by the variety of control schemes you should be able to find one that works okay for you (though, naturally, a second analog stick would be less awkward). Plus, the game looks and sounds solid, and has quick loads and 32-player online play. It's too bad that the single-player feels so much like a [illegible] for the multiplayer, though; the story mode feels a bit disjointed, and you can get through it in [illegible] hours. **JUSTIN CHENG**

FPS ON PSP are still viable.

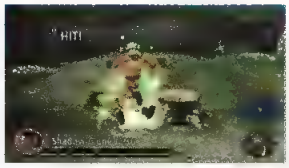


PSP: Dynasty Warriors Vol. 2

PSM SCORE **6.0** out of 10

NO, YOU HAVEN'T READ THIS REVIEW BEFORE

"More of the same" is a good way to describe *Dynasty Warriors Vol. 2*, but that's what's to be expected from the series – and, really, that's what fans of the series want in the first place. It isn't so bad, either, as single-handedly cutting a swath through hundreds of enemies is undeniably fun (even if it does wear a bit thin after a while). There are some new features, too, including even more officers to unlock and some decent multiplayer modes. Unfortunately, the game also shares many of the same flaws as its predecessor: the poor draw distance, the camera issues, and the bland story presentation. **JUSTIN CHENG**



PS2: Naruto: Uzumaki Chronicles

PSM SCORE **6.5** out of 10

CAN THERE REALLY BE TOO MANY NINJA?

When we think of *Naruto*, we think of ninjas and fighting, as there is a whole lot of both throughout the anime and manga series – and, as expected, you'll get a whole lot of both in this action-RPG, *Naruto: Uzumaki Chronicles*. However, you'll get a lot of the same ninjas to fight over and over again. While the camera is maneuverable, it can still be a problem when you're surrounded, but piecing together your skills with the puzzle-like skill system is neat, as are the cameo appearances (though we wish the game had more characters in general), which should please all those *Naruto* fans out there. **JUSTIN CHENG**

DUBBED

Naruto: Uzumaki Chronicles **has the English dub, which is a shame – especially when Naruto occasionally sounds like Bart Simpson's best friend, Milhouse. Believe it!**

NEXT-GEN STYLE

Signature Style, **that is. Every NBA baller plays with his own unique style of play with true-to-life moves and skills for unmatched Next-Gen authenticity.**

#1 RATED NBA GAME

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

NBA.COM

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*According to GameRankings.com 2003-2006 average review scores of NBA simulations.

MAN OF STEEL. [illegible]

PS2: Justice League Heroes

PSM SCORE 7.5 out of 10

MEET THE *CHAMPIONS* OF THE DC UNIVERSE

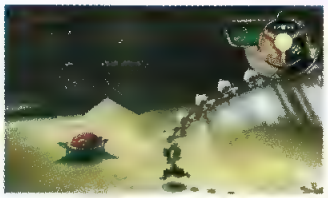
Justice League Heroes [illegible] JUSTIN CHENG

PSP:
WTF: Work Time Fun

PSM SCORE 5.0 out of 10

FUN IN THE LOOSEST SENSE POSSIBLE

The real problem with *Work Time Fun* is that it makes it quite a bit of work to get to any fun. The mini-games, presented as actual jobs in a literally hellish agency, are available four at a time. To play any of the dozens of others, you have to start a game and then wrap it up, hoping that the one you want comes up. It helps encourage the "hellish" atmosphere, but isn't fun. Some games can be completed in moments, but some can run 10 minutes, creating an uneven sense of pacing and style. Game sharing doesn't show up in enough PSP games, and is welcome here, but it isn't enough. **PATRICK JOYNT**



PS2:
Tokobots Plus: Mysteries of the Karakuri

PSM SCORE 4.0 out of 10

"PLUS" IS A RELATIVE TERM

Tokobot Plus fails because it doesn't try to do anything more than coast on the original PSP title's meager merits. There are too many brilliant platformers on the PS2 for that to be enough. The graphics are painfully simple and still suffer slowdown, concealed by a camera that's tremendously difficult to control. The PSP's camera sent you the wrong direction at random, but this one leaves you looking the wrong way at all the wrong times. The titular robots that your character, Bolt, can summon to his aid in the expanded mission selection are faster, but they're still frustrating to use and boring in action. Don't explore these *Mysteries*. **PATRICK JOYNT**

PSP: Gangs of London

PSM SCORE 6.0 out of 10

NOT ACTUALLY OPEN-WORLD, BUT FUN NONETHELESS

Gangs of London bills itself as an open-world game, but in reality it's a truly stupendous collection of mini-games. Think *Warioware* mini-games, with the theme of London thuggery holding them together. Missions in the primary story mode won't take more than five or ten minutes, so rough controls and irritating stealth mechanics are easy to forgive as you rescue abusive girlfriends, garner brutal revenge, and slaughter enemy gangs wholesale in the street. Massive gun battles in Covent Garden define the realism and brutality level. Beyond that, extras include repelling a zombie attack, qualifying to be a London cabbie, and enjoying an excellent retro arcade. Not perfect, but solid portable fun. **PATRICK JOYNT**

CRIME TIME LINEUP

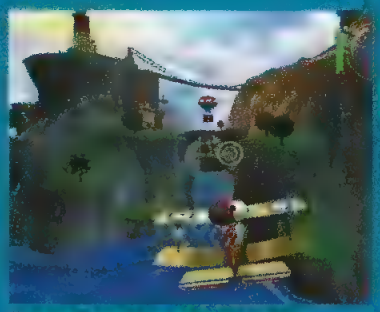
PSP has several other games that revolve around society's criminal element, including *The Godfather: Mob Wars*, *Miami Vice*, and *Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories*, but Rockstar's recent *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories* is far and away the best of the bunch. We gave it a 9.5 out of 10 score last issue.

PS2: Snoopy vs. The Red Baron

PSM SCORE **7.5** out of 10

A FEW MAPS AWAY FROM "KID'S GAME" GREATNESS

A satisfying flight engine means this Peanuts and Dogfight 3-in-1 is heavy fun for adults and kids. Key qualities, like immersion, are sure to [illegible] at a button, and even boosted speed is relatively set for someone in game, not satisfying. The game's look is mostly inventive and charming – imaginative aerial battles unfolding with colorful explosions, exploding beagles that Woodstock rides to new heights, and enemy pilots who sweep and swoop in close. The war doesn't last [illegible] long enough. Overall – "Snoopy" [illegible]



FOUR IN-FLIGHT SNACKS!
Poooooor Sally, we had to go there...

PS2: FIFA Soccer 07

PSM SCORE **7.0** out of 10

IT'S A WINNER, BUT NOT WINNING ELEVEN

Here's how the PS2 soccer picture breaks down: *FIFA* has more league licenses; *Winning Eleven* plays better. The result: *FIFA* sells more. This year, EA aimed to justify those sales numbers by focusing on gameplay, and they've made their license-laden title worth a play. It's too easy, however, to move the ball around and get a scoring opportunity, which takes away the "wow" moment when you beat the keeper. Scoring in *Winning Eleven* is the product of clever play; here, it feels like rote button presses. The game's ingenious online mode makes up for some of it, as you'll pick a favorite team, and play their real-life schedule against fans of the opposition. Very nice indeed.
ARTHUR EDLUND

PS2: The Sims 2: Pets

PSM SCORE **7.0** out of 10

A THOROUGHBRED ADDITION TO THE *SIMS* EXPERIENCE

Pets comes across as a very well-bred animal – desirable traits are sharp, but there are some inbreeding issues. Being able to make your own pet is a great escape for animal owners or *Sims* fans who want to try something different. Caring for your pet to earn "pet points" is a satisfying new mechanic, but... that's about it. Fun, but just playing with your pet to earn pet points to buy your pet new toys to play with gets old. Being able to control your pets directly would be great. If you just *have* to dress a dog in a pink dance outfit, though, *Pets* is easily best in show. **PATRICK JOYNT**

NEXT-GEN SKILLS

Coaches preach it, champions exhibit it–*Team Unity.* If you want to taste The Tournament, you'll have to master team chemistry. Without it, your bubble bursts.

#1 RATED COLLEGE BASKETBALL FRANCHISE*

RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Visit www.esrb.org for updated rating information.

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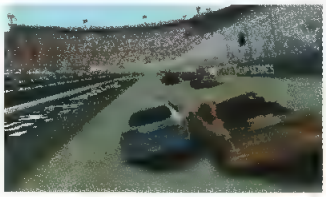
*According to GameRankings.com 2003-2006 average review scores of College Basketball video games.

PS2:
NASCAR 07

PSM SCORE 6.0 out of 10

POSSIBLY THE LAST PS2 STOCK CAR RACER COMES IN LAST

They've improved handling in this season's *NASCAR*. Instead of enduring a virtual slip and slide, now the penalty for overworking your tires isn't as punishing. The better handling is offset by a useless new adrenaline meter. The worst bits, though, are over-aggressive AI drivers that go nuts if you so much as tap them, and an awful online mode that only allows four human drivers. **TODD ZUNIGA**

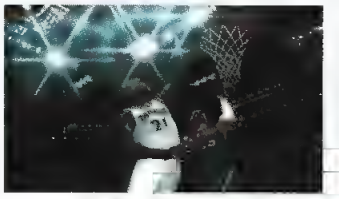


PSP:
NASCAR 07

PSM SCORE 5.0 out of 10

FORGET TIRE GRIP – GETTING A GRIP ON THE HANDLING'S TOUGH

While the improved car handling has bettered the console game experience, the limited movement of the PSP's analog stick will have you swerving all over the track, and playing bumper cars at 185 mph. It wouldn't be so bad if the slightest nudge didn't literally make you a villain in the eyes of opposing drivers. Once they're pissed, they'll throw their cars at you with a psychotic amount of rage. **TODD ZUNIGA**



PS2: NBA 07: Featuring The Life Vol. 2

PSM SCORE 5.0 out of 10

B-BALL THAT'S ALL TALK AND NO GAME

The Life Vol. 2 offers up an enticing narrative complemented by a rich script and great voice work. Problem is, the basketball begins, and the game is exposed as borderline unplayable. If you can look past the off-putting AI mistakes, the wonky camera, and the excruciating load times, you'll still be faced with bad gameplay. So while the story's a boon, this doesn't come close to competing with *NBA 2K7*. **ARTHUR EDLUND**

THERE'S A BETTER GAME

Want to live the life of a baller? Then check out Midway's more arcadey (but much better) hoops game, the original *NBA Ballers*. It's a couple of years old, so you can find it cheap. We scored it an 8.0 out of 10 when it came out.

PSP: NBA 07

PSM SCORE 7.5 out of 10

SONY'S REAL HOOPS HEROICS TAKE PLACE ON ITS PORTABLE

It's shocking how much better the PSP version of Sony's baller is compared to their console effort. The basketball in *NBA 07*'s PS2 version is nearly unplayable and here, too, there are problems: stealing's overdone and there's no way to square up on defense. We're willing to overlook the gameplay faults because of the brilliant Conquest Mode; you'll pick a team and try to "conquer" other teams and take them over – and if you get conquered, it's game over. It's awesome enough to stand alone as its own game. **ARTHUR EDLUND**

PS2: NHL 07

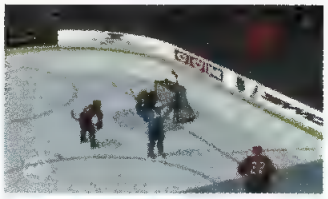
PSM SCORE 7.5 out of 10

EA BRINGS RIGHT ANALOG STICK CLEVERNESS TO THE ICE

Most gamers will agree that the one-timer has become the "Rage of the Gods" of hockey games, but there's good news – *NHL 07* has retooled the one-timer, putting a heavier emphasis on team scoring. There's more: a new Skill Stick feature maps passing to the right analog stick, which makes for a refreshing change. The bad news – if you're jonesing to light the lamp with the new Skill Stick, well, you can't – only passing is allowed in the PS2 version, which leaves us feeling like we got the shaft. **CASEY LYNCH**

SIXAXIS: THE NEXT GREAT GAMEPLAY GIMMICK?

It took a while, but EA Sports finally worked the "orphaned" right analog stick into its entire line of team games to great success. Let's hope we see them find some truly game-improving uses for the PS3 controller's tilt-sensing feature.



PSP: NHL 07

PSM SCORE 7.5 out of 10

FINALLY, A GREAT GAME OF HOCKEY FOR ON THE GO

Electronic Arts must've heard our wishes for a PSP hockey game without Gretzky's name in the title, because *NHL 07* is like a dream come true. Now, that's not to say it's without its faults – graphics chug, the camera strays, leaving the action frustratingly off screen and your AI can't stay out of the sin bin. That's small beans compared to playing a near exact copy of the dynasty mode from the PS2 version on the go. You can even trade saved files between your PSP and PS2 games. **CASEY LYNCH**

WHO'S GOT NEXT?

2K SPORTS

NBA 2K7

NHL 2K7

COLLEGE HOOPS 2K7

2K SPORTS

FOR NEXT-GEN SPORTS GAMERS, IT'S A WHOLE NEW BALLGAME—and 2K Sports is playing to win. Shockingly realistic graphics, silky smooth gameplay and loads of cutting-edge features make this new generation of 2K7 games unbeatable.

2KSPORTS.COM

PLAYSTATION3

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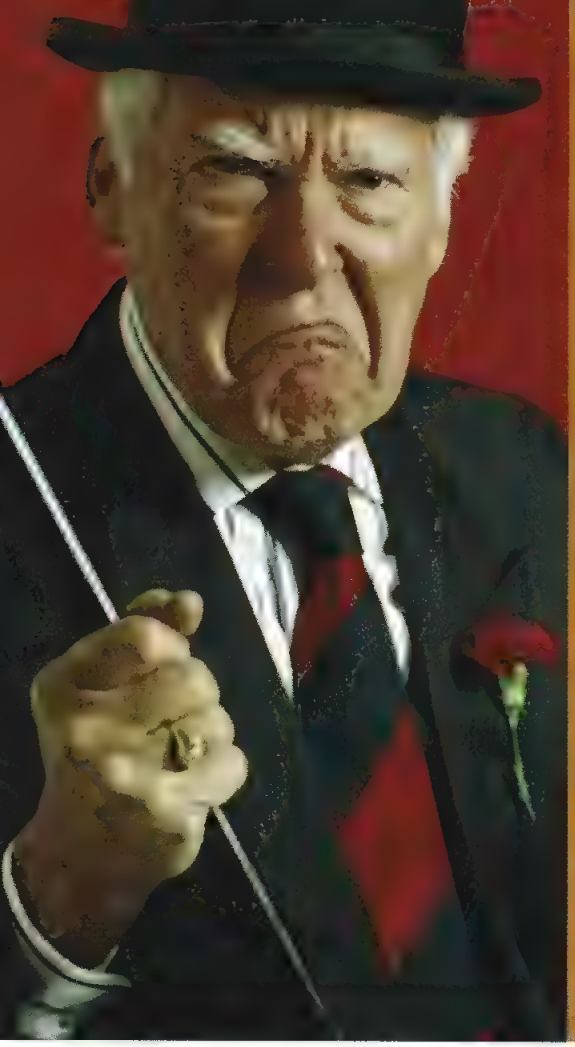
letters

Letter of the Month

"THE SAD TRUTH IS THAT... SONY HAS BITTEN OFF **MORE THAN IT CAN CHEW"**



IS SONY TRYING TO MAKE THE PS3 FAIL?

I just read that the PS3 is now at a shortage of only 500,000 units – 400,000 to the United States and only 100,000 to Japan. With only 400,000 units in the U.S. on launch day, that is going to leave a lot of unhappy gamers, myself included if I can't get one. The father of PlayStation, Ken Kuturagi, is even dissing Sony now and saying that they are dropping the ball on hardware. Oh, I forgot to mention that European gamers won't see a PS3 till March 2007. I want to know what you guys at PSM think about all of this. I know that if you are true PlayStation fans like myself, this has got to upset and maybe even concern you. I have been a believer in the PS3 since I heard about it being released, but it seems Sony is purposely trying to make me buy another console with all the misinformation and constant mess ups. *–Mark Swiger, Buckhannon, WV*

CHRIS: The sad truth is that, by combining so much brand-new tech like a Blu-ray laser and the Cell processor, Sony has bitten off more than it can chew. The *good* news, however, is that what they took that bite out of is incredibly delicious. We've had a chance to chow down on the PS3, and it's one helluva good meal; think of it as a Cell-powered gourmet burger – not the cheapie fast food kind, but like one of those expensive restaurant burgers. They cost more and you have to wait longer for them, but the end result is an unforgettable trip to Tasty Town. And the Sixaxis controller is the extra cheese on the... on the... damn, I'm *hungry*.

Mail...

DIAL-UP A-OK FOR PS3?

Hey, I saw in your October 2006 issue a question regarding PS3 and dial-up. I just wanted to say that PS3's online service will be available via dial-up if you know what you're doing. If you have a computer with at least Windows 98SE and a broadband network card (it's that plug-in that looks like a phone plug but it's wider, for those readers who aren't exactly tech-savvy), you can use internet connection sharing to do this. I use my Xbox 360 with this all the time and lag isn't bad at all on most Xbox titles. What you have to do is make sure your 360 is somehow connected to the computer, be it straight line, straight line through a router, or wireless through a wireless router. After you connect to the internet on your computer, you should see an icon with two blinking computers. Click on it, go to properties, go to the advanced tab, and check the box that says, "Allow other network users to connect through this computer's internet connection." Then just connect to the online service you have and enjoy! *–Daniel Briggs, Jefferson City, TN*

JUSTIN: Thanks for the tip, Daniel. We haven't tried this for ourselves, but it sounds like it should work and should help the many dial-up-only readers who were concerned about going online with the PS3. That being said, we claim no responsibility if it doesn't work for you.

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Mild Suggestive Themes
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PlayStation 2

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XBOX 360 LIVE

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PlayStation 2 screens shown

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contact info Have a comment or question for the PSM team? E-mail us at **psm@futureus-inc.com**, with "General Letters" in the subject line. Hey, you might even win a shirt!

Holiday's mail...

WHERE'D EVERYONE GO?

I read in October's Mail about Eric Bratcher, and I admit I was beginning to wonder where he was. Glad to hear he didn't leave. Speaking of leaving, I was wondering if you guys had any idea what some of the members of your team who have left have been up to? I've been through two redesigns for PSM, and I've seen a few people go over the months (or should I say years?). Hopefully the news on ex-PSMers is good. *–Kyle Cox, Woodland, CA*

CHRIS: Well, let's see... Bill Paris lives in New Jersey and has become a martial arts master; Max Everingham has a top spot at Pioneer in Australia; Francesca Reyes is now Editor-in-Chief of Official Xbox Magazine; Blake Fischer is Worldwide Content Planner for Xbox 360; and last we heard, Tokoya had quit playing games altogether! There were others, of course, but we've kept in even worse touch with them. One of these days we've got to have a reunion... especially since PSM is turning ten in 2007!

PS ONE EMULATION WITHOUT A PS3?

I had a question about how we are supposed to get old PS one games from the online emulator if we don't have a PS3. My brother will probably buy one next year, but what am I supposed to do if I want a game like *FFVII*? I would really appreciate your comments on what I should do because I did hear somewhere that they were only to be bought using the PlayStation 3 online services. *–Josh Wertheim, Redondo Beach, CA*

RANDY: You'll be able to download PS one games onto your PSP memory stick directly by using the PSP's web browser, and there's also talk of in-store kiosks where games can be purchased electronically and downloaded on-site. So, if you're out of a PS3, you're not out of luck.

ASSASSIN'S CREED: NOT PS3 EXCLUSIVE

Okay, so in the Nov 2006 issue you listed PS3 "The games that will separate PS3 from 360 and Wii," but you left out *Assassin's Creed*. I thought that was going to only be on the PS3. I mean, it's one of the games that I'm looking forward to the most... if I can scrape up the money for a PS3. This will be one of the all time greatest games – why wasn't it there? *–Mike Kealiher, Lafayette, CO*

KAISER: Sorry, Mike – I can understand your frustration. Truth is, we would've *loved* to have put it on the list, but the game was announced for PC and Xbox 360 not too long ago. We kinda had a feeling this would be the case, so at the time of writing the feature, we left it off intentionally. Hopefully the game will at least have some PS3-exclusive features to still make it somewhat unique.

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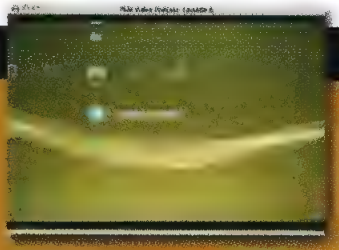
EPISODE 5: Throw the horns with O-Prime and protect your PS3!



EPISODE 6: Take a tour of PS3's many hardware features.

LUMINES™ II

• Nominee, Best Puzzle/Trivia/Parlor Game of E3 2006 – Game Critics Awards

• Nominee, Best PSP Music Game of E3 2006 – IGN.com

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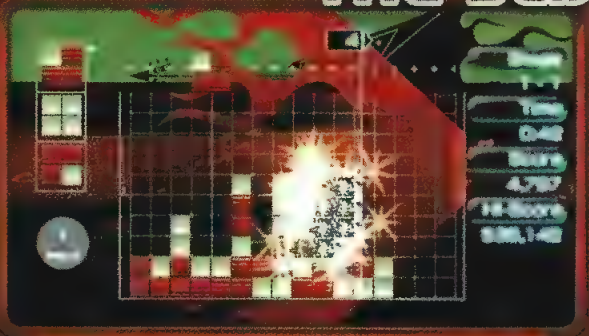

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The Big Contest: Limited-Edition Silver PS2

How To Enter

1 TELL US WHAT YOU THINK OF PS3! Write us a list of your five favorite games of 2006 (you can pick from PS2, PSP, and PS3 titles, but don't exceed five games, total). Also, send us a funny picture involving, or inspired by, your favorite 2006 game.

2 SEND IT IN Email your entry to **psm@futureus-inc.com** with "Holiday Contest" in the subject line. Or, mail your entry to Future US, c/o PSM, 4000 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. Be sure to give us your full name and address to qualify. All entries must be received by February 1st.

3 KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED We'll pick our favorite entry and announce the winner in or around our April issue, on this very page!

WHAT YOU GET:

A limited-edition silver PS2, complete with five of the Holiday season's best new games: *Final Fantasy XII, Okami, Yakuza, Bully,* and *Splinter Cell: Double Agent*!

Past Winners!

PS3 CONTEST WINNER:
Chris Low, Alamo, CA.

LOGITECH WINNER:
Will Coeur, Hamilton, IL

The Legal Stuff

The PSM Editors will pick the winning entry based solely on how funny its photo is. One entry total per individual. All entries must be received no later than February 1, 2007, with the winner being announced in or around the April issue. By entering this contest, you agree that Future US, Inc. may use your name, likeness, and web site for promotional purposes without further payment. All prizes will be awarded and no minimum number of entries is required. Prizes won by minors will be awarded to their parents or legal guardians. Future US is not responsible for damages or expenses that the winners might incur as a result of the Contest or the receipt of a prize, and winners are responsible for income taxes based on the value of the prize received. A list of winners may also be obtained by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Future US, Inc., c/o PSM Holiday Contest, 4000 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. This contest is limited to residents of the United States. No purchase necessary; void in Arizona, Maryland, Vermont, Puerto Rico, and where prohibited by law.

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PlayStation 2

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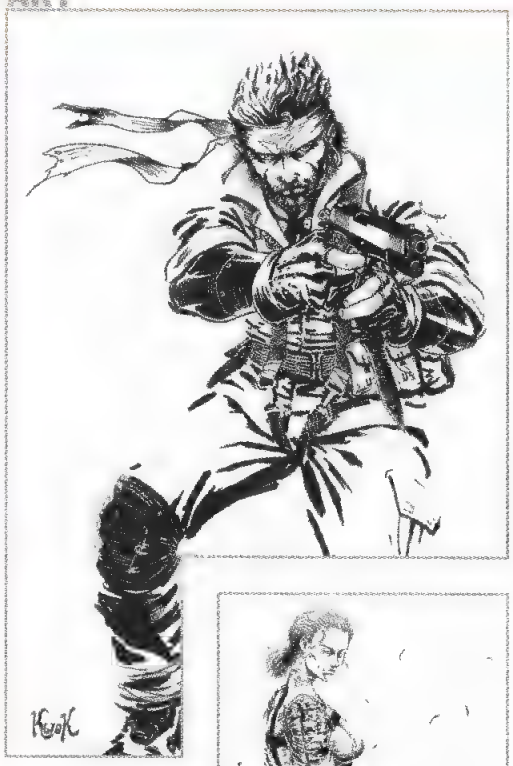
Fandom: Above and beyond the call...

COSTUME

FFX-2: DRESS(SPHERE) FOR SUCCESS Rebecca and Bergundi' Ithier from Dinwiddie, VA, as Rikku's Mascot Dressphere and Yuna's Gunner Dressphere.

ART



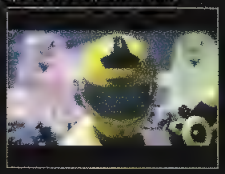
SNAKE DRAWER Richard Kwok stuns us again with these awesome *Snake Eater* pics. See more art at ghostyurei.deviantart.com.

SHORT MOVIE

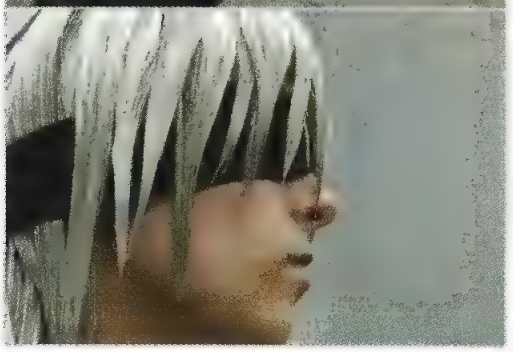
Go Watch: "PAC MAN: THE MOVIE"

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWL6j0SvqV0

Okay, now *this* is interesting. We've seen a lot of videogame movies, some good and some bad (okay, they're all bad), but we'd never thought we'd see a *Pac-Man* movie like this one from Zoltarkill. For more information, check out Zoltarkill's site, www.myspace.com/zoltarkill.



SEND US STUFF! Send *your* displays of fandom to us at [illegible] with "Fandom" in the subject line. Art, websites, custom toys, cosplay... we want it all! The best stuff will be displayed here every issue!



HAVE A HEART We haven't seen too much *Kingdom Hearts* cosplay lately (where's the love?), but a reader known only as juumou sent in this great cosplay of Riku from *Kingdom Hearts II*.

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by Adam Warren

The PS3's New (E)motion-Sensing Controller

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